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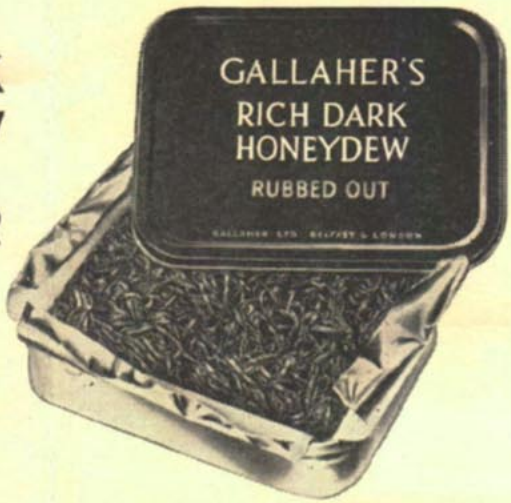

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Passion and Politics

By David Marquand

As THE DUST of battle begins to settle, it is becoming clear that the civil war which has raged in the Labour Party for the last two years has, with one exception, solved nothing. The exception is, of course, the position of Mr. Hugh Gaitskell. He has emerged as the strongest leader the Labour Party has ever had; his personal pre-eminence amongst his colleagues is far greater than Lord Attlee's ever was, and at least as great as Ramsay MacDonald's used to be. In some ways, no doubt, this may not be an unmixed blessing. It is always dangerous, as the mention of Ramsay MacDonald reminds one, for a political party to be too closely identified with a single man. And although Mr. Gaitskell's own stature is, or should be, higher than that of any other British politician, the same cannot be said of his chief lieutenants. With the best will in the world, it is a little difficult to see Harold Wilson as a second Stafford Cripps.

On the whole, however, Mr. Gaitskell's present standing in his party is an enormous asset to his party's standing in the country. For once, the built-in tendency of the mass media to reduce political issues to personalities has benefited the Labour Party instead of damaging it. What the general public has seen over the past two years is a political morality play, in three acts. In *Act I*, the hero starts out on his quest for the holy grail. In *Act II*, he is set upon by evil men, and left for dead. In *Act III*, he triumphs, and, like a true knight, proves as magnanimous in victory as he was staunch in adversity. The real story is, of course, far more complicated. In actual fact, Mr. Gaitskell's plight was never as serious as it seemed, and his victory is less complete than it looks. But this does not matter. Seen through the mass media, what has happened is a smashing victory for courage and integrity. To millions of people all over the country, the Labour Party is now Mr. Gaitskell's party.

It is too soon to assess the electoral impact of this morality play, but it is likely to be considerable. It is a truism that in Britain, in contrast to the United States, the personal character of the individual parliamentary candidate counts for comparatively little at the polls (though it seems to have counted for more at the last election than at any other since the war). The electors vote, quite rightly, for the party and not for the man. But it is sometimes forgotten that the decline in the importance of the individual candidate has been accompanied by a rise in the importance of the party leader. In Britain, as in France and West Germany, parliamentary politics are giving way to presidential politics. It is not at all clear how much of the increase in the SPD's vote in the West German elections last September can be attributed to Willy Brandt. What is clear is that the CDU party-managers feared that Brandt's personality would have a considerable impact. If they had not done so, they would not have bothered to launch a smear campaign against him. After Blackpool, Mr. Gaitskell is well placed to become the British Brandt.

In OTHER RESPECTS, however, the outcome of the Blackpool conference is much less clear-cut. It is true, of course, that the Labour Party has now reversed the unilateralist decision it reached at Scarborough; and that the parliamentary party and the rank and file are, in theory, united behind a "multilateralist" defence policy. It is equally true, however, that the policy which triumphed at Blackpool is not at all the same policy as that defeated at Scarborough. The decision formally reached at Scarborough had been made months before. The union votes which carried the unilateralist resolution had been decided upon at the union conferences which met early that summer—when the official leadership of the Labour Party was still committed to the British H-bomb. Hence, the unilateralist victory was, in a sense, an artificial one, since the policy which lost had been abandoned before the conference began. Hence, too, the multilateralist victory at Blackpool was equally artificial. As Mr. Frank Cousins made

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abundantly clear in his interview with John Freeman some weeks ago, the official policy of the Labour Party is now almost indistinguishable from his. It is, as a matter of fact, equally close to the original policy of the CND.

This is not to say that the multilateralist victory is unimportant, or that the Labour Party's defence policy is a bad one. On the contrary, abandoning the British H-bomb while staying in NATO seems to me the only sensible policy for this country to adopt; and it is deplorable that the Labour Party should have taken so long to see the light. But the wisdom or unwisdom of the Labour Party's defence policy is not the point at issue. The real point is that the balance of power in the Labour Party proved to be such that the leadership could maintain its position only by making significant concessions to its critics. Like Disraeli, it stole its opponents' clothes while they were bathing. Although the clothes have proved to be a good fit, that does not alter the fact that they were tailored for someone else.

THE SAME IS TRUE, more obviously and in the long run perhaps more importantly, of the party's home policy. Here the roles of the Left and Right are reversed. This time, it was the Right which hoped to change the party's policy, and the Left which stood on the defensive. Perhaps for this reason, the Right's failure to win a complete victory was a great deal more marked than it was over defence policy. Once again, the point at issue is not whether the policy suggested in *"Signposts for the Sixties"* is a good one. It is that the leadership (or at any rate, the leader) was forced to abandon its head-on attack on Clause 4, in preference for more oblique methods. Once again, the battle between Right and Left ended in compromise. It is true, of course, that the programme on which Labour will fight the next election is likely to have more in common with Mr. Gaitskell's conception of socialism than with Mr. Michael Foot's. The fact remains that Clause 4 still stands, in spite of Mr. Gaitskell's attempt to get rid of it.

The third issue which has divided the Labour Party during the past two years is the right of the party conference to decide party policy. Here at least, one might have thought, the leadership has won a decisive and unambiguous victory. Surely the pretensions of the party conference need no longer be taken seriously, now that its claim to control the parliamentary party has been successfully defied? Even here, the truth is more complicated. The efforts made by Mr. Gaitskell and the Campaign for Democratic Socialism to recapture control of the conference have shown, paradoxically, that the conference still matters a great deal more than they would like. No one would trouble to "fight, fight, and fight again" to win a meaningless victory from a body with no authority. As for the trade unions, their crucial importance in and to the Labour Party has never been so heavily underlined. Like every other successful leader of the Labour Party, Mr. Gaitskell has turned out to hold his position by the grace of a number of trade union executives. It is all very well to suggest, as an abstract proposition of political science, that the Labour Party would be better off without the union block vote. Perhaps it might; but the elections to the constituency section of the National Executive have shown once again that without the block vote Mr. Gaitskell might not now be leader of the party. This state of affairs has led, naturally enough, to a certain amount of head-shaking and heart-searching on both wings of the party —and even more among the well-wishers on its fringes. No one likes losing, and on this occasion both sides have lost. The Left has failed to commit the party to a neutralist foreign policy or to a programme of full-blooded socialism. The Right has failed to destroy the power of the party conference, to free the party from its electorally embarrassing proletarian associations, or to commit it to an explicitly "revisionist" ideology. What the intellectuals of the New Left disparagingly call "Labourism" —meaning an illogical and intellectually vacuous compromise between socialist rhetoric and reformist practice—is still in the saddle.

THIS DEADLOCK seems to have disappointed the Right more than the Left. The Left-wing of the Labour Party is the "Light Brigade" of British politics, charging heroically into the valley of death at every party conference, not for victory but for glory. For it, politics is a moral demonstration, not an opportunity for getting things done. To the average Left-wing member of a constituency Labour Party, words matter more than deeds. A strongly-phrased resolution of indignation is of infinitely greater emotional significance than the opportunity to influence events in such a way that indignation would no longer be called for. To the rank-and-file Left-winger, power and

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the mechanics of power are suspect; he is so accustomed to failure that success would seem to him almost immoral. If the unilateralists had won at Blackpool, the Left might have been called upon to lead the party, to use all the sordid tricks of cajolery and compromise which virtuous men touch not, lest they be defiled. As things are, it can sit back and enjoy its righteousness, confident in the knowledge that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church.

In any case, the disappointment of the Left has little significance for practical politics, since the Left has no other home to go to. The disappointment of the Right, however, may have some political significance—and the disappointment of liberal-minded outsiders who would like to see a progressive Government in power, but who feel uneasily that the Labour Party is not quite worthy of their support, may have even more. The disappointment of these two groups has not yet become vocal. They are so relieved to find the Labour Party in safe hands that they are naturally disinclined to rock the boat. Nevertheless, traces of it can already be seen in the liberal press, and it is likely to grow more noticeable as time goes on.

The disappointment of the Right is expressed in two arguments, one of principle and the other of expediency. The argument of expediency can be summarised as follows. In order to win the next election, the Labour Party must attract a "swing" of approximately the same magnitude as that which went to the Conservatives between 1945 and 1951. It is true that, according to the August Gallup Poll, the Labour Party had a lead of 5 percentage points over the Government, but this lead has now (in October) disappeared. However inept the Government's management of the economy may be, even Mr. Selwyn Lloyd is sufficiently competent to produce the requisite boom in time for the next election. The Labour Party will not be returned to power by a transitory protest vote, which melts away as soon as the Central Office embarks on a lavish advertising programme. It needs the considered allegiance of a growing proportion of the electorate, which will stand by it in good weather as well as in bad.

WHERE IS IT to find this considered allegiance? There is only one answer: from that growing section of the working class which feels itself to be middle-class, and which votes Conservative not out of deference but out of pride. It is here that Labour's lost legions are to be found, and it is here that the next election will be decided. But how is Labour to recapture these lost legions? Once again, the answer seems obvious. It must convince them that it is no longer the party of the manual working class alone, that it stands for the ambitious and successful as well as for the poor and unfortunate. It must show that although it has close links with the trade unions (as all progressive parties have), it is not controlled by them. It must show, above all, that its programme is based on the objective needs of the country, not on dogmatic adherence to public ownership as such. Finally, in order to do all this, it must at all costs avoid the kind of fuzzy compromise with its own Left wing which means all things to all men and which is wide open to Conservative misrepresentation at election time.

At this point, the argument of expediency merges into the argument of principle. For the argument of principle asserts that the ideology of the Left is not only electorally damaging, but sociologically irrelevant. What used to be called "capitalism," it is said, has changed so profoundly that the old Socialist remedies are no longer pertinent. The Socialist goals of equal opportunity and a classless society can be reached, more quickly and more easily, by methods other than public ownership. Educational privilege can be combated at its source in the public schools; inherited fortunes can be cut down by taxation; the economy can be controlled, and the required rate of growth obtained, without nationalising a single industry. Moreover, this argument continues, there is a profound and logically unbridgeable gulf between the "plural society" envisaged by the Right, and the dimly-imagined but passionately-desired "organic" Utopia of the Left. Hence, a compromise with the Left is not only embarrassing on polling day; it is wrong in itself.

In spite of their superficial plausibility, and the undoubted truth of many of the facts they adduce, both these arguments seem to me to be based on a fundamental misconception of the nature of democratic politics. Let me take the argument of principle first. It is perfectly true that many of the Left's ideas are out of date, and that there is a wide gulf of principle between its Utopianism and the pluralism of the Right. But it does not follow that a compromise between Left and Right is wrong, unless one accepts the hidden premise that it is wrong to compromise with people whose beliefs are logically incompatible with one's own. This

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premise seems to me extremely dangerous. Political parties in this country have always been coalitions; and the first principle of coalition politics is tolerance. It is because British politicians have been unwilling to subordinate party unity to logical consistency that this country has managed to weather the storms of the last 150 years without violence. If political parties in this country were based on consistent ideologies, the Conservative Party would split in about three directions, the Labour Party in four or five, and the Liberals in a half a dozen. I cannot think that this would be an advantage. It is true, of course, that one cannot compromise with a political group which refuses to accept the limits of parliamentary democracy. If the Left wing of the Labour Party were to accept the advice of some members of the New Left, and abandon parliamentary methods in favour of unconstitutional action, then further compromise would be out of the question. But in fact the vast majority of the Labour Left is as firmly committed to parliamentary methods as the Right and Centre are.

The liberal journalists and Right-wing members of the Labour Party who dream longingly of the day when the Left can be crushed frequently support their arguments with an appeal to democracy. In fact, their attitudes on this question are profoundly undemocratic. Mr. Michael Foot is undoubtedly a thorn in Mr. Gaitskell's flesh; and it would be far pleasanter for the leadership if he, and those who think like him, did not belong to the Labour Party. But they do exist, and they constitute a significant minority of Left-wing opinion—just as Sir Thomas Moore and the people who think like *him* constitute a significant minority of opinion on the Right. However obnoxious these groups may be, they have a right to make their views known and their influence felt in the House of Commons. Under the British Constitution they cannot do this unless they attach themselves to one of the two main parties. The existence of a lunatic fringe on the extreme Right of the Conservative Party and the extreme Left of the Labour Party is part of the price we pay for running a parliamentary democracy without proportional representation. The House of Commons cannot fulfil its representative functions—which are, after all, its most important functions—unless the two great party machines tolerate the minorities within their own ranks. To drive the minorities out would be to disfranchise the sections of public opinion which they represent. Those who want to see the Labour Party solidly united behind the leadership, purged of its Left-wing dissidents, are in fact asking for a monolithic party which has no business to exist on this side of the iron curtain.

If it could be shown that the present uneasy compromise between Left and Right condemns the Labour Party to permanent opposition; if the argument of expediency were, in fact, correct; then there might be something to be said for a further struggle against the Left. But I doubt very much whether this can be shown. Like the argument of principle, the argument of expediency contains a hidden premise, which deserves more rigorous analysis than it usually gets. This premise is that a party whose "image" is blurred, whose programme is a compromise between incompatible views, and whose members pull it in different directions, cannot win power.

This seems to me to be demonstrably false. One could hardly imagine a less coherent political party than the Democrats in the United States. The different elements within it have less in common than the Right and Left in the Labour Party have. Close association with the Southern Democrats is at least as distressing to conscientious Northern liberals as close association with Mr. Cousins is to members of the Campaign for Democratic Socialism. Yet President Kennedy won the election last year, not by insisting that his party should adopt a single, coherent ideology, but by doing the exact opposite. He reassured the South by making Lyndon Johnson his running mate; he reassured the Negroes by telephoning Mrs. Martin Luther King when her husband was arrested; he reassured the liberals by adopting a liberal platform—and he distracted attention from the logical inconsistencies in his own position by fighting an aggressive campaign which put the Republicans on the defensive.

The experience of the American Democrats seems to me particularly relevant to the objections which are sometimes made by Right-wing Labour intellectuals to the party's proletarian image. There is an obvious parallel between the block vote of the trade unions at Labour Party conferences and the block vote of the Southern Democrats at a Democratic Party convention. Both are offensive to liberal minded people; both are a handicap to their respective parties in decent middle-class constituencies. Yet every sensible Democratic politician knows that he

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cannot do without the South; and every sensible Labour politician knows that he cannot do without the trade unions.

The fact is that the Labour Party has a proletarian image because it deserves one. It *is* the party of the manual working class, and so long as the great industrial trade unions find it convenient to maintain a parliamentary pressure group, that is what it will remain. It is true that the manual working class is slowly diminishing in size, and that the defensive, suspicious attitudes born of the class war are slowly disappearing. But the key-word here is: "slowly." The attitudes of the younger generation of manual workers are certainly very different from those of their parents. But no one who has read Mr. Alan Sillitoe's novels, or bothered to use his eyes and ears in any large industrial city, can possibly believe that this younger generation is already satisfactorily integrated into the ethos of welfare capitalism. In the long run, over a period of fifty years or so, the Labour Party's proletarian image will probably fade away of its own accord. In the meantime, it would be fatal for the Labour Party leadership to rush on ahead of the slow process of social change.

It would be fatal because it could only be done by destroying the party altogether. In the last analysis, the Labour Party's proletarian image is not an "image" at all: it is an important part of its face—which could only be removed by the most painful form of plastic surgery. Abandoning public ownership, which is sometimes suggested as the best way to make the Labour Party acceptable to the middle and would-be middle classes, is irrelevant to this problem. It is not the Socialists on the Left who make the Labour Party look proletarian, but the trade unionists on both wings of the party. There is no reason to suppose that Sir Thomas Williamson is any more popular in suburbia than Mr. Cousins is; indeed, it is doubtful if the average white-collar householder is aware of the differences between them. Hence, the party's proletarian image can only be smashed by a public and dramatic dethronement of the trade unions. Even if this were desirable, it is not attainable—for no one is strong enough to do the dethroning.

If it were true that the Labour Party cannot win an election until it convinces the middle class that it is no longer a working-class party, the logical conclusion would be that it cannot win an election at all. In that case, it might as well adopt the suggestion made by Mr. Crossman in his Fabian pamphlet a year ago, and embark on a *guerre à l'outrance* against "capitalism." In fact, I doubt whether this assumption is true. The white-collar workers who aspire to middle-class status have just been told, in the most brutal fashion, that their aspirations are based on self-deception. Thanks to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's pay pause, the Government is now busily teaching them that they have more in common with the manual working class than they do with the Conservative Party's supporters in the middle class proper. The most sensible policy for the Labour Party is surely to drive this lesson home—and the most sensible policy for liberal-minded outsiders is to realise that the Labour Party cannot adapt itself more quickly than it is already doing, without committing political suicide.

Henry Fairlie: The Exclusive Ones

No one who attended both the Conservative and Labour party conferences this year could fail to be struck by the most obvious contrast between them: in the Conservative Party, an eagerness for power, all the more impressive after ten full years in office, and a polite assumption of the right to govern; in the Labour Party, a distaste for power, as if, after ten years, opposition has become an addiction, and even, in some quarters, a tendency to acknowledge its present unfitness for office.

It is true that things may already be on the mend within the Labour Party: there has been some evidence during the past year that the officers of constituency associations, especially of those with a chance of gaining a seat from the Conservatives, are growing tired of the wreckers. As the election draws nearer, their voices will probably increase in number and in weight. After all, a party cannot lose four general elections in a row and still hope that the country will recognise it, even remember it, as an alternative government. If the Labour Party is again defeated at the next election, it cannot reasonably hope to survive as an effective political force: slowly, its members seem

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to be realising this, and there should be a noticeable rallying to the leadership during the next twelve months.

The contrast with the Conservative Party nevertheless remains. In Trollope's *Can You Forgive Her?*, Palliser, by then Chancellor of the Exchequer, addresses Grey, a new member of the House:

> "I hope you'll like it," he said to Grey.
> "I shall never like it as you do," Grey answered.
> "Why not, why not?"
> "In the first place, I have begun it too late."
> "Any time before thirty-five is young enough."
> "For useful work, yes, but hardly for enjoyment in the thing."

It is enjoyment in the thing which is the real mark of the Conservative Party. "This is a game not to be managed without difficulty," wrote Walpole to Stanhope at a critical moment in his career. Without this enchantment with the game of politics, a politician and a political party are worse than useless.

THE CONSERVATIVES held their conference at Brighton only two days after Mr. Macmillan had changed his Cabinet. Everyone was intrigued by the moves, and everyone had his own interpretation of them. It was, indeed, a tribute to Mr. Macmillan's skill that few people could agree as to who had been moved up and who had been pushed down. It was exactly the situation in which the knives should have been out, and certainly in the Labour Party they would have been. Instead, even the ministers most concerned, who were still gingerly feeling the new ground under their feet to make quite sure that there was some there, moved round the lobbies and corridors of the conference hotel, examining the changes with what seemed to be almost cynical detachment.

This may appear to be of trivial importance. But politics is largely—although by no means only (that, one suspects, is Mr. Macmillan's mistake)—the skilful handling of men and occasions. If a party and its leaders do not know how to enjoy the game, the game will deteriorate into a bitter battle, and every unavoidable personal upset will be publicly exaggerated, and will in private distract the party and its leaders from the serious business of governing, or preparing to govern. The most important lesson a politician has to learn is that, even if he is Prime Minister, he can never choose the people with whom he must work: occasions and necessities beyond his control choose them for him. It is the only game and the only business in which one's most unrelenting enemy may also, perforce, be one's closest ally.

WHY IS IT that the Labour Party has nothing of this necessary and, in the end, civilising attitude to power? Why does every dispute within the party degenerate into a public brawl, with its intellectuals who, all too often, are also its journalists, whipping up the crowds to watch—and gloat? As almost every political observer, of every political persuasion, has warned the Labour Party since the annual conferences, it can no longer fall back on its consoling myths about the Conservatives. It can no longer attribute the ease with which the Conservative Party governs solely to excellent stage-managing, or the deference which its rank and file normally pays to its leaders. Every impartial observer is agreed that, whatever the legitimate stage-managing, the debates at the Conservative conference this year were impressive, both in the genuineness of the arguments, and in the consistently high level which was maintained. If (and this is not the case), but even if this were the result of stage-managing, anyone who made the journey from Blackpool to Brighton would add simply: let us have more.

When I wrote in ENCOUNTER after last year's Labour Party conference, I said that too many people in it did not want, indeed, were frightened of, power. This, and I cannot emphasise it too strongly, is the one thing which has not changed in the party in twelve months. This is why, even in an intellectual journal, I make no apology for directing attention to the simplest things which politics is about.

If one looks for reasons for this attitude to power, the first which strikes one whenever one comes close to the Labour Party is its exclusiveness. This emerged with stark imbecility in Mr. Frank Cousins's declaration that the Labour Party did not want to win Tory votes in the country. How on earth, then, is it ever going to get back to office? Mr. Gaitskell made an adequate debating retort to this piece of nonsense, but in fact Mr. Cousins's attitude runs deep in the party to-day. It was the same attitude which made Mr. Shinwell say that he did not care a tinker's cuss for Tory opinion, and Mr. Bevan call Conservative voters vermin. Last year, I argued that all this implied a deep con-

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tempt for ordinary people, and this still seems to me the real disease in the Labour Party. But there is more, in preciser terms, to it than that.

First, there is the unbelievable ideological exclusiveness of the party. In his eccentric but always worthwhile book on *The Socialist Tradition*, Professor Alexander Gray traced its origins back to Moses. But if Moses had been a member of the modern Labour Party, he would never have brought the tablets down from Sinai, but formed an executive committee with Jethro and Aaron to discourse on them on the mountain top. In February of this year, the bureau of the Socialist International met in London. The report of the meeting which appeared in *The Times* was bewildering to an outsider:

> A meeting of the bureau of the International in London yesterday discussed the possibility of a new declaration of principles to be drawn up in time for consideration at their congress in Italy in October. The initiative seems to have come from the Germans and Austrians at the summit conference of Socialists in Salzburg last month.
>
> One of the things they had in mind was to "reaffirm, amplify, and clarify"... the references to public ownership in the declarations of the present International at Frankfurt in July, 1951. The Frankfurt declaration....

So it went on, concluding that

> Among British delegates yesterday . . . Mr. Crossman, the party chairman, and Mr. Gaitskell, the party leader, might have been expected to take divergent views had not Mr. Crossman had to leave the meeting before the subject was discussed.

On such accidents does the fate, if not of nations, of Internationals depend.

AT THE MOMENT of writing, the International has just ended its session in Rome (while Mr. Khrushchev dropped his 30 megaton bomb, and the International recorded its verbal protest, and those of us who think it to be our business have tried to unravel its discussions and find some meaning or relevance in them. But, "the Frankfurt declaration," "the Salzburg declaration," and (except that they could not agree on its terms) "the Rome declaration:" of what possible significance are they? The purpose of such definitive utterances can only be to exclude: to provide an ideological test to which those who might otherwise be willing allies must submit. I do not deny that, in a revolutionary party, in a revolutionary situation, such close, ideological definition may be necessary, in order to create and hold together a dedicated cadre of revolutionary leaders. But this has nothing to do with the methods by which democratic socialist parties, seeking power by persuasion, in countries adjusting themselves to comparative prosperity, should and must seek office. Mr. Gaitskell and Mayor Willy Brandt, exchanging terminological arguments in Rome, are all right, until one remembers that both of them have recently lost elections which might have been won.

If the Labour Party continues in this theological spirit, it will leave no room for any angels on the head of the pin it is always arguing about. The party has entrenched itself on a kind of intellectual Staten Island: you need an ideological visa in order to belong to it, which may arguably be a proper precaution; but you also need one in order to be allowed to vote for it, and for this, in an adult, democratic party, there can be no excuse.

THE SECOND, AND VERY DIFFERENT, reason for the party's frivolous attitude to power is that it is ridden by the rule of Buggins's turn. In no other party have seniority, and senility even, ever been such a sure certificate to authority and influence. Why should the chairmanship of the party go, year by year, in unalterable order of length of service, to those who have been on the national executive of the party longest. Ah, one will be told, this is the democratic way of doing things. But it is not. It is a caricature of democracy, as if the chairmanship of a party, like the chairmanship of a school debating society, were some sort of prize or reward. Why should a great party, appealing to a whole people, be burdened with someone as chairman during a critical year, for no other reason than that the lottery of the vote has regularly gone in his favour? Because the tide was with it, the party survived the experience of having Professor Harold Laski as its chairman during the general election of 1945. There is no proof that it could again overcome another such handicap.

But this clubman's, Co-op attitude to seniority runs the whole way through the party. Silently, without exerting anything more than informal pressure, the Conservative party has recently been persuading more and more of its constituency associations to change their chairmen at least once in every three years: seniority and service to the party are not to be counted as sufficient claims to the position, and there is little doubt that this has had a dynamic in-

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fluence in changing the character of the annual conference. But, to go from divisional Labour party to divisional Labour party, the kind of melancholy journey it would need a Belloc to describe, is to pass from ageing aldermanic bench to ageing aldermanic bench. Offices in the party, at all levels, are still distributed as old-fashioned firms present time-pieces or engraved biscuit barrels to their more loyal workers. It is affecting, but it is as dead as Arnold Bennett.

We have been watching one characteristic example of this principle at work during the past year. No one would wish to detract from the services which Mr. Morgan Phillips has given as secretary of the Labour Party. He has helped it out of many a tight corner which it would not have got into if it had taken his advice earlier. But he is old, and he is very ill; the fact that he has fought four general elections as secretary of the party is no assurance that he is the right man to fight a fifth. With painful slowness the Labour Party brings itself to accept this fact. "Delicate moves," *The Times* was able to report after Blackpool, were being taken to make "generous provision for the future relationship of Mr. Morgan Phillips with Transport House. This will open the way for the post of general secretary to be advertised."

What is a party about when it advertises a post as important as that of general secretary? As well, when it was returned to office, advertise for the posts of Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer. Again, reports *The Times*, "attention seems to be fixed on those who are in their forties, with many years of service ahead of them." Why this insistence on "many years of service?" The need is to find a secretary who will get the party in fighting trim for the next general election. After that, there will be a different situation and, possibly, the need for a different man. But, no, the situation is to be advertised with the promise of a gold watch at the end.

IN ALL THIS, there is as much of exclusiveness, in personal terms, within the party as there is in its insistence on theological argument. The party is to be run for insiders, on the strongest of old- (and how old!) boy networks. Those who might be encouraged to assist it, even those who might want to vote for it, are frightened off with the warning that trespassers will be prosecuted. In how many towns, in the past fifteen years, has the local Labour party made any serious attempt to win over people with local influence? In how many towns has it approached, informally but keenly, the local grocers or butchers or solicitors or carriers, and made them feel needed and wanted, as the Liberal Party, with its tenuous resources, has been doing with such dramatic local effect up and down the country? In how many towns are members of the local Labour party taking an active and leading part in the amenity and community associations, the branches of the Civil Trust, and so on? The total, I think, would be minute.

Meanwhile, the country is deprived of any genuine political choice, because of the lack of any genuine alternative government; the strong radical tradition in British politics is deprived of leadership and of point; the free world is deprived of the effective contribution which the greatest reforming movement in the world could make to the fight against Communism, leaving that fight, as a result, to be conducted by men and parties with a less sensitive and imaginative grasp of the great ideas by which men are moved. All this is lost, and the loss may ten years from now prove to be a disaster for the West at some moment of critical challenge, because the Labour Party, frightened of the choices which power forces men to make, frightened of the compromises which it inevitably involves, prefers to run itself for itself, until its ideas just as much as its officers look like old-age pensioners. It is the most exclusive society in the world, which is why its membership is not replacing itself.

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POETRY

The Dedicated Poet

The Oxford Inaugural Lecture — By ROBERT GRAVES

I THANK those of you members of Congregation who, last February, disregarded the warning of London's best-known literary weekly: to the effect that, though a poet, Mr. Graves could have nothing either novel or important to say from this Chair—which, it was added, might be better occupied by a Russian or French savant or, better still, by a bright young lecturer from a red-brick university. The same editorial insisted that the Professor you chose to address what would be predominantly an undergraduate audience, should adopt a serious moral attitude consonant with the dignity of his, or her, position. I do not dispute this last point; but poetic morals can surely be best discussed by poets: who, in the course of their labours, suffer pricks of professional conscience at which a Muscovite savant, or a bright young red-brick lecturer, cannot do more than guess.

This Chair, the only elective one at Oxford, has been linked by statute with the School of English Language and Literature—albeit of far older foundation. The occupant is therefore expected to make no pronouncement irreconcilable with the view of poetry that tutors and examiners require from undergraduates. It may thus be called a Siege Perilous: because Ben Jonson, of glorious memory, to whom the young wits of Oxford used to flock when in his old age he held forth at Great Tew, allowed poets alone the faculty of judging poems; and few English School tutors have been practising poets.... As Domingo Ortega, the veteran bullfighter remarked the other day (the translation is mine):

> *Bullfight critics ranked in rows*
> *Crowd the enormous Plaza full;*
> *But only one is there who* knows
> *And he's the man who fights the bull.*

Of course: to be a practising poet is not necessarily to be a good one. I know my own poetic limitations well enough, and shall never forget the gentle rebuke once addressed to me by a personal Muse:

> *Forgive me, giver, if I destroy the gift!*
> *It is so nearly what would please me*
> *I cannot but perfect it.*

Nevertheless, only a poet of experience can hope to put himself in the shoes of his predecessors or contemporaries, and judge their poems by re-creating technical and emotional dilemmas which they faced while at work on them. The method may be called "analeptic mimesis": one slowly copies out the poem by hand, as if it were a first draft of one's own. When the pen checks at a word or a phrase, one becomes intuitively aware of laziness, doubt, stupidity, or some compromise with moral principle.

Yes: I know that Dr. Samuel Johnson sturdily rejected Ben Jonson's view. He licensed non-poets to judge any poem, on the ground that a man has a right to scold his carpenter for making him a bad table. But this surely begs the question? Granted that if Dr. Johnson bespoke a table, giving detailed instructions for its manufacture, he had every right to complain if these were disobeyed; but not since Sir Roger Newdigate founded his Prize, in the early 19th century, has it been seriously believed that even Universities have a right to bespeak poems. I am lucky, I confess. My Oxford English School colleagues still preserve the undogmatic and indulgent spirit I found displayed here soon after the First World War, when Sir Walter Raleigh was Merton Professor, and Mr. Percy Simpson my tutor. They neither encourage nor discourage undergraduates who choose to swim in the foul tidal basin of modernism: merely requiring from them a close attention to the primitive roots of our language and the long history of our literature. Yet this cannot be said of certain other English Schools. Besides, it is always tempting for tutors to commend the set Classics as worthy of a praise which few of them deserve —even if judged as literary fashion-plates, rather than as reading matter. And I have observed elsewhere that for most examinees the word "appreciate" has lost its original sense of "evaluation," and come to mean "admire."

THE EARLIEST and clearest example of the dedicated poet is John Skelton, one of Oxford's greatest glories, whom I discovered by accident in 1916, while on short leave from the

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Somme trenches; and on long leave from St. John's College. What heightened my shock of delight was that nobody else, it seemed, had felt as I did about him during the past four centuries.

Skelton, it is true, began his studies at Cambridge and probably took his B.A. there; but for a final academic polish came to "Oxforth" where, as he writes:

> *By whole consent of their Senáte*
> *I was made Poet Laureate....*

This degree, taken in October, 1488, according to Professor William Nelson, implied a diligent study of mediæval grammar and rhetoric, though the *Poeta Laureatus* need not have written any poems—except perhaps a hundred Virgilian hexameters, and a Latin comedy, both eulogising Oxford, to prove that he had mastered Latin prosody and the Aristotelian unities. Yet in old age, after being created *Orator Regius*, a sort of Latin Secretary, by his former pupil King Henry VIII, Skelton made a startling public avowal of devotion to the Muse-goddess, when he appeared wearing a white and green Court dress embroidered with the golden name CALLIOPE. He chose Calliope ("lovely face") rather than any of the Goddess's eight other names because, as he writes in an *amplificatio* of Diodorus Siculus' *History*, Calliope combines "incomparable riches of eloquence with profound sadness."

WHY WEAR YE CALLIOPE EMBROIDERED WITH LETTERS OF GOLD?
SKELTON LAUREATE, ORATOR REGIUS, MAKETH HIS ANSWER.

Calliope,
As ye may see,
Regent is she
Of poets all,
Which gave to me
The high degree
Laureate to be
Of fame royál.

Whose name enrolled
With silk and gold
I dare be bold
Thus for to wear
Of her I hold,
And her household.
Though I wax old
And some-deal serc,

Yet is she fain,
Void of disdain,
Me to retain
Her serviture:
With her certáin
I will remain
As my soveréign
Most of pleasure--
Maulgré touz malheureux....

He adds a *"latinum carmen,"* which I shall translate:

> *Calliope, who rules over prophetic poets, her white robe embroidered with glittering gold, crowning Pierian devotees with laurel: it is she whom I, a Pierian, shall ever account worthy of the greatest honour while I still have life. And though I grow old and my body slowly decays, yet I swear still to wear this loyal pledge of her love, and yield to her gentle poetic inspiration. Famous Calliope, whose image is next to my heart! Thus speaks a Pierian, one more free than any Spartan, since Calliope the most excellent, most beautiful, most shapely of the Muses, presides over my heroic verses.*

Historians will dismiss this as early Tudor rhodomontade; but wrongly. "More free than any Spartan" gives the clue. It refers to the famous stand of the Spartans at Thermopylae, and Skelton is claiming as a poet the liberty of thought and action which King Lycurgus' proto-Fascist discipline denied even the most patriotic Spartans. (By the way, they sent only a token force against the Persians—300 out of the many thousands they could put into the field.) Skelton explains in his play *Magnificence*:

> *To live under law it is captivity:*
> *Where dread leadeth the dance there is no joy nor pride.*
> *Or how can you prove there is felicity*
> *An you have not your own free liberty*
> *To sport at your pleasúre, to run and to ride?*

He made good his claim to freedom by being the one man in England who, at the height of Cardinal Wolsey's power—when Dread led the dance—dared oppose him in cruelly satiric verses as a traitor to King, Church, and people. And though appointed Rector of Diss in Norfolk, by Royal favour, Skelton did not hesitate to take what was then called a "remedy" for his celibate condition—a regular concubine—with whom he lived until his death, and by whom he had several children. The following "Merry Tale of Skelton," a version of which appeared while he was still alive, may well be authentic:

> *Skelton went into the pulpit to preach and said:* "Vos estis, vos estis," *that is to say: "You be, you be!" "And what be you?" said Skelton. "I say that you be a sort of knaves, yea and a man might say worse than knaves, and why I shall show ye. You have complained of me to the bishop that I do keep a fair wench in my house. I do tell you that if you had any fair wives, it were somewhat to help me at need. I am a man as you be. You have foul wives and I have a fair wench, of the which I have begotten a fair boy, as I do think, and as you all shall see."— "Thou wife," said Skelton, "that hast my child, be not afraid! Bring hither my child to me!" The which was done.*

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And he, showing his child naked to all the parish, said: "How say ye, neighbours all? It hath nose, eyes, hands and feet as well as any of yours: it is not like a pig or a calf, nor like no fowl nor no monstrous beast. If I had," said Skelton, "brought forth this child without arms or legs or that it were deformed, being a monstrous thing, I would never have blamed you to have complained to the bishop of me. But to complain without a cause—I say, as I said before in my antethem, vos estis, *you be, and have be, and will and shall be, knaves, to complain of me without a cause reasonable.... If that you exalt yourselves and cannot be contented that I have my wench still, some of you shall wear horns, and therefore* vos estis, *and so farewell!"*

Nevertheless, Skelton's pledge to Calliope presumes his knowledge of a different sort of love than the carnal Remedy—the old solace which the parish of St. Ebbe's used to offer Oxford Fellows under the ancient celibacy rule; and this is evidenced by his *Divers Ditties Solacious*. No more direct and sincere love poems had yet been written in English. In his old age he calls himself the "British Catullus." The historic parallel is close, if only because Catullus had dared satirise Julius Cæsar at the height of his power, and displayed the heart of a true lover. Skelton writes with profound sadness to his unnamed Muse:

Remorse have I of your most goodlihood,
Of your behaviour courteous and bening,
Of your bountee and of your womanhood
Which maketh my heart oft to leap and spring
And to remember many a pretty thing;
But absence, alas, with trembling fear and dread
Abasheth me, albeit I have no need.

You I assurë, absence is my foe,
My deadly woe, my painful heaviness,
And if ye list to know the cause why so,
Open mine heart, behold my mind express!...
I would ye could! Then should ye see, maistress,
How there nis thing that I covett so fain
As to embrace you in my armës twain.

Nothing earthly to me more désiróus
Than to behold your beauteous countenance.
But, hateful Absence to me so envious,
Though thou withdraw me from her, by long distance,
Yet shall she never out of rémembránce—
For I have gravéd her within the secret wall
Of my true heart, to love her best of all.

His *Garland of Laurell*, addresses to a bevy of young Court ladies, are well known. To Margery Wentworth:

With marjoram gentle
The flower of goodlihood
Embroidered the mantle
Is of your maidenhood....

To Margaret Hussy:

Merry Margaret
A midsummer flower,
Gentle as falcon
Or hawk of the tower....

(By the way, he gets his own back on Mistress Gertrude Statham, with whom he has had a tiff:

Though you were hard hearted
And I with you thwarted
With wordës that smarted....

by wishing her the happy fate of Dame Pasiphaë—a cruel mythological reference which she will certainly have missed.)

HERE I MUST DISTINGUISH, as I have done before, between devotees of Apollo and those of the Muse. Apollonian poetry is composed in the forepart of the mind: wittily, should the occasion serve, always reasonably, always on a preconceived plan, and derived from a close knowledge of rhetoric, prosody, Classical example, and contemporary fashion. It may, of course, disguise simple statement in masquerade dress, but if so, observes all masquerade conventions; whether the dress chosen be mediæval doublet and hose, pastoral smock, Roman toga, or pseudo-Homeric armour. The Apollonian allows no personal emotions to obtrude, and no unexpected incident to break the smooth musical flow of his verse. The pleasure he offers is consciously æsthetic.

Muse poetry is composed at the back of the mind: an unaccountable product of a trance in which the emotions of love, fear, anger, or grief are profoundly engaged, though at the same time powerfully disciplined; in which intuitive thought reigns supralogically, and personal rhythm subdues metre to its purposes. The effect on readers of Muse poetry, with its opposite poles of ecstasy and melancholia, is what the French call a *frisson*, and the Scots call a "grue" —meaning the shudder provoked by fearful or supernatural experiences.

If every Englishman were content to undergo a normal education, work hard in a regular job, order his life reasonably, marry a sensible woman, pay his taxes when required, be socially co-operative, and count himself happy in such well-doing, then there would be little need for Muse poets. This sort of Englishman has never, as a matter of fact, been typical of our race. But since he is widely assumed as typical, it may be argued on his behalf: "Should we not esteem accomplished Apollonian poems above these products of morbid psychology? If the formal discipline of verse can endow a concept with

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grace and memorability, should we not regard loyal odes to the Sovereign, celebrations of rural pleasure, epic accounts of heroic feats, elegies for the dead, and stately epithalamia, as worthy of the highest honour?"

My answer is: No reason at all, if you have never felt a grue or *frisson* in your life, never fallen desperately in love, never faced personal disaster, never questioned the religious tenets of your childhood—no reason whatsoever, except perhaps this practical one: that the flowery age which bred such exercises is now long overblown. Apollonian masterpieces may still arouse historic interest, but they have lost contemporary relevance—ask any librarian or publisher what demand there is for them, unless as required school or college text-books, or as morocco-bound prizes. To be honest: the refinement of quick, clean prose down the centuries, encouraged by cheap printing and universal literacy, and with it the provision of countless sharper, brighter pleasures than were ever before known, has made the formal Apollonian poem a dead bore to all but specialists. There is still room in modern life for the epigram, the topical squib, the *memoria technica*, the rhymed advertisement; but for what else? That a distinguished English bard has just published his autobiography in the form of a long blank-verse poem, does not weaken my contention: he is displaying once more his whimsical nostalgia for the irrecoverable past. But as the Apollonian poem fades away—despite bold attempts to revive its rhetoric by modernistic art-techniques borrowed from impressionism, expressionism, surrealism, or existentialism—so the Muse poem comes into its own.

Let me speak as a poet, rather than a professor—in mythical language. An ancient Greek prophecy is being fulfilled before our eyes. Apollo, the god of Science, having formed a palace conspiracy with his half-brother Hermes, god of Politics, and his uncle Ploutus, god of Money, has emasculated Almighty Zeus with the same curved sickle, laid up at Sicilian Drepane, that Zeus used on his father Cronus. Zeus still remains propped on his throne, but a Regency Council of Three has taken over his powers. In this new anarchical era anything may happen. That the Divine Triumvirate are suspicious of each other, and that their rival ambitions have made them careless of mankind, is proved by the absurd cold war now being waged between East and West, with the massive resources of Science, Money, and Politics. They have cut civilisation loose from its moorings: familiar coasts of orthodox religion, philosophy, and economics fade in the dusky distance. Crazy new cults are preached, old ones revived; ghosts supposedly laid centuries ago creep out of their graves, not only at dusk but by broad daylight. And the ancient sovereign Goddess, who has been waiting these last three thousand years to return with power, observes her opportunity. The political and economic emancipation of women, which was needed to implement Zeus' downfall, has had unforeseen consequences. Despite the successful conversion of a great many of them, especially business women and civil servants, not into matriarchs but into pseudo-patriarchs, a small but powerful minority find themselves free to be simply women, clear of male tutelage. With these newcomers woman's magical power over man, so long curbed, reappears in something of its primitive glory and ferociousness; and the uglier the anarchy caused by the demise of Father Zeus, and the quarrels of his successors, the better become the Goddess's chances of persuading mankind that she can offer a wholesome change from the wholly negative cult of scientific plutodemocracy. It is possible, of course, that the Triumvirate will patch up their differences, make common cause, and try to hang the Goddess from the vault of Heaven once more, with anvils tied to her feet, which was Father Zeus' way; or banish her to a nunnery, which was the Church Fathers' way; but this can be no easy task. Meanwhile, Muse-poets who understand what is happening, and what is at stake, even more clearly perhaps than historians and anthropologists, can provide the emotional physic to which the rising generation, many of them painfully caught in the Goddess's net, will take recourse.... I hope I have not startled or offended you. My old friend Max Beerbohm made an even direr prophecy in his ***Zuleika Dobson***: that of all young Oxford none but the ignoble Noakes shall be proof against the Goddess's cruel spell.... And that afterwards she will look up the trains for Cambridge.

Back to Skelton, whose era was also one of change: the Renaissance and the Breach with Rome having given the Muse a foothold at Court, which she kept until dislodged by Cromwell's Ironsides; and Skelton was her servant. It is true that, as priest, scholar, and Court official, he could not avoid writing ornate Apollonian verse in earnest of his professional capacities—as Catullus had done—but he did so with a covert half-smile at the understanding Muse. For example, his *Prayer to the Father of Heaven*:

O radiant Luminary of light interminable,
Celestial Father, potential God of might,
Of heaven and earth, O Lord incomparable
Of all perfections the essential most perfite!
O Maker of Mankind, that formèd day and night,

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Whose power imperial comprendeth every place—
Mine heart, my mind, my thought, my whole delight
Is, after this life, to see Thy glorious face.

Whose magnificence is incomprehensible,
All arguments of reason which far doth exceed,
Whose Deity, doubtless, is indivisible,
From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed;
Of Thy support all créatures have need.
Assist me, good Lord, and grant me of Thy grace
To live to Thy pleasúre in worde, thought and deed,
And, after this life, to see Thy glorious face.

Which leaves us dazzled, but cold; we even suspect that Skelton has been naughtily ambiguous in his "*Potential* God of might," and in "Whose Deity, *doubtless*, is indivisible."

He also addressed the Second Person of the Trinity:

O benign Jesu, my sovereign Lord and King,
The only Sonnë of God by filiation,
The Second Person, withouten béginning,
Both God and man (our faith maketh relation)
Mary, thy Mother, by way of incarnation—
Whose glorious passion our soulës doth revive
Against all bodily and ghostly tribulation,
Defend me with thy piteous woundës five!

"Both God and man (our faith maketh relation)": another line of possible ambiguity. For Skelton had doubts about the Real Presence, if we can believe the story of a palfrey lent him by Bishop Stephen Gardiner. Instead of returning the beast as desired, Skelton sent the Bishop a verse letter:

Non meministi
Quod mihi scripsisti
De corpore Christi?
Sic tibi rescribo
De tuo palfrido:
"Crede quod habes, et habes.'

"You do not remember what you wrote to me about Christ's body. I write back the same thing about your palfrey: 'Believe that you have it, and you have it.' "

Yet when Skelton adopts an ancient sacrificial theme inspired by the Goddess, his lines are emotionally aflame:

Woefully arrayed
And shamefully betrayed,
My blood, man,
For thee ran
It may not be nayed:
My body blue and wan
Woefully arrayed. . . ,
Thus naked am I nailëd, O man, for thy sake.
I love thee, then love me. Why sleepest thou?
Awake!
Remember my tender heart root for thee brake,
With painës my veinës constrainëd to crake.
Thus tugged to and fro,
Thus wrappëd all in woe,
Whereas never man was so
Entreated thus in most cruel wise:
Was like a lamb offered in sacrifice,
Woefully arrayed.

Of sharp thorn I have worn a crown on my head,
So painëd, so stainëd, so rueful, so red
Thus bobbëd, thus robbëd, thus for thy love dead,
Unfainëd not deignëd my blood for to shed.
My feet and handës sore
The sturdy nailës bore;
What might I suffer more
Than I have done, O man, for thee?
Come when thou list, welcome to me,
Woefully arrayed.

But the flame dies down again, and flickers out in ecclesiastic homily:

Dear brother, no other thing I of thee desire
But give me thine heart free to reward mine hire.
I wrought thee, I bought thee from eternal fire.
I pray thee, array thee toward my high empire
Above the orient
Whereof I am regént
Lord God Omnipotent,
With me to reign in endless wealth.
Remember, man, thy soulës health.

To banish from his nostrils the odour of incense and sweating Norfolk congregations, Skelton wrote *Philip Sparrow*. He used Goliardic verses, blithely parodying the most sacred of Catholic Church rites: including the *Commendatio Animae*, the *Officium Defunctorum*, the *Missa pro Defunctis*, the *Absolutio super Tumulum*; and all in honour of Jane Scroop's pet sparrow eaten by the Convent cat at Carrow near Norwich. (It is, of course, an elaboration of the *Passer mortuus est meae puellae* by Catullus, whose *editio princeps* had been recently published.) Jane was not a little girl, as is often assumed, but a beauty in her early twenties; and Skelton, the middle-aged incumbent of nearby Diss, had fallen in love with her. He makes Jane dwell on tender memories of Philip's tricks and sports, and utter furious curses on the assassin:

Vengeance I ask and cry,
By way of exclamation,
On all the wholë nation
Of cats both wild and tame:
God send them sorrow and shame!
That cat especially
That slew most cruelly
My little pretty sparrow
That I brought up at Carrow. . . .

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The léopards savage,
The lions in their rage,
Might catch thee in their paws
And gnaw thee in their jaws;
The serpents of Libany
Might sting thee venomously;
The dragons with their tongues
Might poison thy liver and lungs;
The man-tigers of the mountáins
Might feed them on thy brains . . .
Of Inde the greedy grypes
Might tear out all thy tripes;
Of Arcady the bears
Might pluck away thine ears;
The wild wolf Lycaon
Bite asunder thy back bone!
Of Etna the brenning hill
That day and night brenneth still
Set in thy tail a blaze,
That all the world may gaze
And wonder upon thee
From Ocean, the great sea,
Unto the Isles of Orcady,
From Tilbury Ferry
To the plain of Salisbury,
So traitorously my bird to kill
That never owed thee evil will. . . .

The humorous violence of this outburst is a measure of Skelton's true feelings for Jane, whom he here boldly deifies as the Muse herself! H. R. L. Edwards, a leading authority on Skelton, emphasises that in the passage entitled *Commendations*, which is a direct praise of Jane's beauty, he has substituted *Domina* for *Domine*, in all his Biblical quotations. "Deal bounteously with thy servant, that I may live, and my lips shall praise thee. Teach me, Lady, the way of thy statutes. As the heart panteth for the water brooks, so longeth my soul for thee, Lady. Remember thy word to thy servant—and I am thy servant." (John Donne similarly substituted *Domina* for *Domine* in a Biblical quotation written above an early portrait, discovered the other day, which shows him in a love-trance "with folded arms and melancholy hat.") Skelton writes of his Muse:

Her eyën grey and steep
Causeth my heart to leap,
With her browës bent
She well may represent
Fair Lucrece, as I ween,
Or else fair Polyxene . . .
Her beauty to augment
Dame Nature hath her lent
A wart upon her cheek
That seemeth from afar
Like to a radiant star—
All with favour fret
So properly is it set.
She is the violet,
The daisy déléctable
The columbine cómmendáble
The jélofer ámiáble
For this most goodly flour
This blossom of fresh colóur
(So Jupiter me secure)
She flourisheth new and new,
In beauty and virtúe,
Hac claritate gemina,
O gloriosa femina,
Bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo, Domina,
Et ex praecordiis sonant praeconia.

"Thou hast dealt kindly with thy servant. Lady,
And from his heart rings out thy commendation."

TWENTY YEARS LATER, in his *Garland of Laurell* (1523), Skelton finds himself obliged to defend *Philip Sparrow*: for although Jane originally asked him to write it, and although she fed his poetic flame, she now complains that he has insulted her—being by this time, alas, a respectable widow, relict of Thomas Brews, Esq., at whose side she lies on a funeral brass in the parish church of Little Wenham.

To know the Muse well, is to have experienced betrayal: the inevitable penalty of aspiring to her love. Skelton has not omitted to record this cruel aspect:

"My darling dear, my daisy flour,
"Let me," quoth he, "lie in your lap."
"Lie still," quoth she, "my paramour,
Lie still, hardely, and take a nap."
His head was heavy, such was his hap,
All drowsy dreaming, drowned in sleep,
That of his love he took no keep,
With "lullay, lullay, like a child
Thou sleepst too long, thou art beguiled."

With "ba, ba, ba," and "bas, bas, bas,"
She cherished him both cheek and chin,
That he wist never where he was;
He had forgotten all deadly sin.
He wanted wit her love to win.
He trusted her payment, and lost all his pay,
She left him sleeping, and stole away
With "lullay, lullay, like a child
Thou sleepst too long, thou art beguiled."

The rivers rowth, the waters wan,
She sparëd not to wet her feet;
She waded over, she found a man
Who halsëd her hartly, and kissed her sweet.
Instead of a cold she caught an heat.
"My love," she said, "rowteth in his bed
Ywis he hath an heavy head"—
With "lullay, lullay, like a child
Thou sleepst too long, thou art beguiled."

What more natural than that Skelton should have earned the opprobrium of two prime English Appolonians, Milton and Pope? Milton, in his *Areopagitica*, even wanted Skelton's works censored! His outrageous low-life satire, *The Tunning of Elinour Rumming*, was the excuse for their attacks; but they clearly resented his

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earthy humour, reckless courage, poetic independence, and dedication to a personal Muse. No Apollonian dares lampoon a public figure of Cardinal Wolsey's stature, or parody Church ritual, or drink in country taverns with rogues and trollops, or publish scurrilous songs—nor does he wear CALLIOPE embroidered on his white and green Court dress. Though scorned as a mountebank, Skelton possessed higher scholarly distinctions than any of his traducers—degrees at Oxford, Cambridge (the only Laureate ever created there), and Louvain. The great Erasmus had hailed him in Latin verse as worthy of unfading laurels, as inspired by Calliope, sweeter-throated than the dying swan, the rival of Orpheus himself. Britain (Erasmus insisted) should admit that her debt to Skelton equals that of Greece to Homer, Mantua to Virgil; for it was he who first introduced the Muses to his fellow-countrymen, who first taught them to speak their own language accurately and purely.

This is of course hyperbole. Skelton never claimed to be the father of English poetry, and acknowledged his filial affection for Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate; though, as he rightly pointed out, "they lacked the laurel": the emblem of learning in the humanities. He was, however, not only the first scholar to write popular English verse, but the first Muse-poet to appear in England. (I am well aware that Chaucer toyed with the artificial French tradition of courtly love in his prologue to *The Legend of Good Women*; but long association with City merchants while Comptroller of Customs made a cynic of him. In *Troilus and Cresyde*, he plainly aligns himself with Pandarus, who persuades his niece that fine words butter no parsnips, and that she should take a practical view of her future.) A study of the *Oxford English Dictionary* will show that Skelton enriched our vocabulary more than any other poet before and since, even Chaucer. He also wrote the teasing, inconsequential, passionate *Speake, Parrot!* ... its stanzas liberally sprinkled with polyglot pseudo-learning, which Professor Ian Gordon calls the first modernist poem in England. Yet it is cut wholly from native cloth, in native fashion, and makes perfect sense to the informed reader—none of which things can be said of 20th-century Anglo-American modernism.

IN THE BIBLIOGRAPHY attached to his *Garland of Laurell*, Skelton characteristically not only lists such Apollonian works as *The Book of Honorous Estate*, *The Book of the Rosary*, *Dialogues of Imagination*, his translations of Cicero's *Ad Familiares* and Diodorus Siculus' *History*—but interlards them with his wilder extravagances:

Of Mannerly Mistress Margery Milk and Ale
To her he wrote many matters of mirth,
Yet (though I say it) thereby lieth a tale:
For Margery wincëd and brake her hinder girth.
Lord, how she made muche of her gentle birth!
With "Gingerly, go gingerly!" Her tail was made of hay;
Go she never so gingerly, her honesty's gone away.

The Duke of York's creauncer when Skelton was,
Now Henry the Eighth, King of Engeland,
A treatise he devisëd and brought it to pass,
Called Speculum Principis, *to bear in his hand,*
Therein to readë, and to understand
All the demeanour of princely estate
To be our King, of God preordinate.

Also The Tunning of Elinour Rumming
With Colin Clout, John Jew, *with* Joforth Jack
To make such trifles it asketh some cunning,
In honest mirth, pardee, requireth no lack;
The white appeareth the better for the black,
And after conveyance as the world goes
It is no folly to use the Welshman's hose.

"After conveyance as the world goes" means "since trickery is now in fashion"; "to use the Welshman's hose" means to take liberties with solemn texts—a Welshman's hose, like a shipman's hose, is one that will fit any leg.

The umbles of venison, the bottle of wine,
To fair Mistress Anne that should have been sent
He wrote thereof full many a pretty line
Where it became, and whither it went,
And how that it was wantonly spent,
The Ballad also of the Mustard Tart—
Such problemës to paint it 'longeth to his art.

Skelton could not repudiate the world unless perhaps by turning hermit like his saintly predecessor Richard Rolle of Hampole; and he enjoyed life too much for that. A dedicated poet is "a man as you be," who needs food, drink, lodging, and even domestic happiness—none of which benefits are bestowed on him without payment. But though he may make concessions to authority by wearing academic robes, or Court dress, or even a cassock, he must never smother poetic principle; must feel free to swap jokes with Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale, John Jew, Joforth Jack, Elinour Rumming, and "Mistress Kate, that farley sweet, Who wones at the Key in Thamës Street."

Dedicated poets cannot exist in a vacuum, discarding all tradition, all knowledge, rejecting society. They must be at least as well grounded as was Shakespeare, whose Petty School *A.B.C. with the Catechism*, his *Primer and Catechism*, his *Book of Common Prayer* and *Psalter*, assisted him later to a self-education in more

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readable works. But Shakespeare was a special case; and so was John Clare, who had an equally limited schooling. I believe that every poet should read our English Classics, master the main grammatic rules before daring to bend or break them; should travel abroad, be at ease among all sorts and conditions of men, and experience not only the horrors of thwarted passion but, if he is fortunate, the tranquil love of an honest woman. The supreme gift bestowed on him by the Muse is that of poetic humour: a grasp of the identity of opposites, the wearing of Welshman's hose. Sometimes, in fact, when a poem has been assiduously refined and refined under the white blaze of inspiration, its final draft becomes so perfect in its ambivalence as to make the poet humorously doubt whether the insertion of a simple "not" will perhaps improve it.

Good manners demand that visitors should respect the laws of whatever society has courteously entertained them—court, university, public house, or gipsy camp; and poets, by their nature, are perpetual visitors. Skelton, like Naaman, bowed in the House of Rimmon, his fingers humorously crossed. I piously follow his example; and look with disgust on the so-called beatnik poets whose boast is that they conduct themselves with equal bad manners in all societies.

ERASMUS REFERRED to Skelton as a *vates*, and the inscription on Skelton's tomb at St. Margaret's, Westminster, ran: *Joannes Skelton, vates Pierius, hic situs est. Vates*, though occurring as a conveniently spondaic synonym for *poeta* in the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, means a good deal more than "poet." A *vates* is a prophet, one divinely possessed; one who must speak the truth, however strange or distasteful, and is sometimes granted visions both of the future and the past. *Pierian* means a native of Pieria, the district lying below Olympus, which was the birthplace not only of the poet Orpheus, but of the Ninefold Muse herself. The true Pierian limits his loyalties to those reconcilable with his worship of the Goddess "Whose service is perfect freedom"—a phrase, oddly enough, borrowed by St. Augustine from Apuleius' address to Isis, and by Thomas Cranmer from St. Augustine. The fewer the poet's affiliations, political, social, ecclesiastical, or scholastic, the better his chances of doing good work. Every gainful trade or profession has its characteristic occupational deformity: I have already mentioned Chaucer's Comptrollership of Customs. Shakespeare even regretted his actor-managership, complaining in a sonnet that the player's hand was dyed by it. And to avoid adopting a gainful trade or profession is difficult. Nevertheless, so long as a poet distinguishes Love from Remedy, and Wisdom from Learning; so long as he expects no rewards from the Muse and no pity, never allows his business or domestic affairs to erase her name from the "secret wall of his true heart", never enlarges his public figure at the expense of his private self, the poetic trance may recur, from time to time, throughout his life. "Poor Devil" or "Lucky Devil"; it does not matter which you call him —the coin spins evenly.

Poets who decide to live by poetry, and remain otherwise uncommitted, should not understand "live by" in a financial sense. Until yesterday, or the day before, they were tempted to graduate as major poets—all Muse poetry is minor poetry, if length be the criterion—by writing verse plays or long philosophical works destined for posterity. Apollo would make them rich and famous, would secure them an honourable place in the curriculum—even name Ages after them. As I wrote once: "To invoke posterity is to weep on your own grave."

And the punishment is fixed:
To be found fully ancestral,
To be cast in bronze for a city square,
To dribble green in times of rain
And stain the pedestal.

Spiders in the spread beard;
A life proverbial
On clergy lips a-cackle;
Eponymous institutes,
Their luckless architecture.

Two more dates of life and birth
For the hour of special study
From which all boys and girls of mettle
Twice a week play truant
And worn excuses try....

Skelton pictures himself in *The Garland of Laurell* as conducted triumphantly to the Hall of Fame, where a whole crowd of authors—including such second-raters as Aulus Gellius, Sallust, Quinctilian, Quintus Curtius, Macrobius, Propertius, Poggio, and John Bochas—wait to greet him. Yet this is an elaborate joke against himself. Skelton knew just how good his writing was, and though he may have expected to live posthumously: "where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men" (a thought later borrowed by Shakespeare from Ennius), he cannot have been unaware that the mouths of men are highly unselective: filled with worthless tags from the least worthy of Apollonians—and even from anti-poets.

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Marcus Cunliffe

Europe and America

Transatlantic Images (I)

IMAGE: *Artificial imitation of the external form of an object, statue (esp. of saint, etc., as object of veneration); optical counterpart produced by rays of light reflected from mirror, refracted through lens, etc.; form, semblance; . . . simile; metaphor; idea, conception. . . .*

IMAGINARY: *Existing only in imagination; (Math.) having no real existence, but assumed to exist for a special purpose (e.g., square root of negative quantity).*

CONCISE OXFORD DICTIONARY

Imaginary America

THERE is a vast literature of responses to America, more particularly of responses to the United States. Their precise nature has varied with time and circumstance, and according to the nationality, temperament, and social class of the observer. But much of the comment is repetitious; and some of the repetitions have such an astonishingly long history that they encourage a simple and summary form of classification. The notion of "images" frees us from too strict a regard for event or chronology. Let us start then with two elementary propositions and see where they lead.

The first proposition is that for most Europeans America has never existed. Instead of being a "real" place it has served as an image: a theorem, a symbol, a Never-Never Land. How characteristic indeed that the whimsical Scottish dramatist, J. M. Barrie, should stock the Never-Never Land of his *Peter Pan* with figures of fantasy from the New World: Caribbean pirates and prowling Indians. The children who read Barrie in British nurseries took to bed with them another product of American folk-lore, the teddy-bear, which derived from the near-mythical exploits of Theodore Roosevelt. What head of state in a European country ever made a comparable contribution to the dreams of early childhood? How characteristic, too, that the founder of the Boy Scout movement, Baden-Powell, should draw their name and some of their rituals from what he had heard of Red Indian life. Or that when the French writer of fantasies, Jules Verne, visited the United States with his brother just after the Civil War, they should make a special pilgrimage to the Fenimore Cooper region and address one another while there as "Hawkeye" and "Chingachgook." As James Russell Lowell remarked in 1869, "for some reason or other, the European has rarely been able to see America except in caricature."

The second proposition, which these mild instances conceal, is that European images of America have rarely been dispassionate. Samuel Gompers, the American trade-union leader, said after visiting Europe in 1909 that its peoples saw his country through one of two mirrors, either convex or concave. "Has the discovery of America been useful or hurtful to mankind?"—this was the title of an article published in 1784, typical of many of the period. The question has been raised again and again ever since, in

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essentially the same form. It was still being asked in 1960 when the Oxford University Union debated the motion, *"That this house holds America responsible for spreading vulgarity in Western society."* America, which by degrees has come to signify the United States, not the whole hemisphere, has been one thing *or* the other: compliment or recrimination, adoration or detestation, boosting or knocking, the last best hope *or* an awful warning and a cautionary tale. Convex or concave, the image has been of a hypothetical place, so enveloped in didacticisms that the French traveller Georges Duhamel protested:

> I can't see the Americans for America.... Between the American citizen and me there rises I know not what monstrous phantom, a collection of laws, institutions, prejudices, and even myths.... I see a system rather than a people. Men, about whom I always feel an eager curiosity, in this country seem to me like pure ideograms, like the signs of an abstract, algebraic, and yet already fabulous civilisation.

The square root of a negative quantity.... Duhamel did not allow his confession of bewilderment to inhibit him. Nor have other commentators, for whom America has provided whatever generalisation they happened to seek. Tocqueville's admission, *"J'avoue que dans l'Amérique, j'ai vu plus que l'Amérique,"* could be applied to a hundred European theorisers on America. Sometimes they are hardly talking about America at all. Franz Kafka's friends in Prague were startled to learn from him in 1913 that he was at work on a novel entitled *Amerika*, though he understood very little English and had probably never met an American. And despite its title a recent French book, Lucien Lehman's *"Ces Cochons d'Américains!!"* (1954), turns out to be a vigorous essay on the defects of the author's own nation, with a few incidental references to the phenomenon of anti-Americanism.

One thing *or* the other. The point may be illustrated by listing examples of a heroic image of America, and then by presenting some of the contrasting, villainous images.

The Heroic Image

THE EARTHLY PARADISE. The proposition that America has never existed as a real place for Europeans can be extended. We can say that the New World was invented before it was discovered. Mythology preceded exploration; and discovery happily fitted previous invention. In classical and in mediæval legend there are persistent references to Atlantis; to the Hesperides; to Avalon; to the Blessed Isles: to some lost and perfect kingdom beyond the western seas. And we have the Garden of Eden, the earthly paradise from which sorrowful Adam was expelled. Columbus's Caribbean landfall in 1492 gave them all a possible, actual habitation. He himself was convinced, he wrote, that he had found "the terrestrial paradise." In Michael Drayton's poem *To the Virginian Voyage*, Virginia is described as "Earth's only paradise," still governed by the natural laws of the Golden Age. True, the early panegyrists of the New World, like the later ones, speak from mixed motives. They are often interested parties, promoters, advertisers. Yet they are not cynical liars: they are unable to separate fact from fancy when the two are so strangely conjoined.

THE NOBLE SAVAGE. The natives of the newfound hemisphere (and of other, subsequently discovered territories, including the South Sea islands) likewise ministered to a European necessity. Columbus reported them to be virtuous and handsome. In the next century the picture was enlarged. "They seem to live," said Peter Martyr, "in that golden world of the which old writers speak so much: wherein men lived simply and innocently without enforcement of laws, with quarrelling Judges and libels, content only to satisfy nature, without further vexation for knowledge of things to come." The American aborigines were thus converted into Noble Savages, free from the sins of sophistication that troubled European moralists in the 17th and 18th centuries. Full of natural dignity, integrity, and wisdom, the Noble Savage furnished an admirable contrast to the corrupt courtier or man of fashion in Paris and London.

By the eve of the American Revolution, sympathetic Europeans could assure themselves that the white settler in North America had absorbed some of the attributes of the aborigines. In the 1771 edition of *L'élève de la nature* (a Utopian novel first published in 1763, and avowedly inspired by Rousseau's *Emile*) the author, Gaspard de Beaurien, added a dedication to the "Inhabitants of Virginia":

> In that land which you inhabit and which you cultivate, there are to be found neither cities nor

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> luxury nor crimes nor infirmities. Every day of your lives is serene, for the purity of your souls is communicated to the skies above you. You are free, you labour, and bring forth all about you, besides your abundant crops, a harvest of all the virtues. You are as Nature would wish us all to be. I therefore dedicate to you this portrait of a man whom I have conceived as formed by Nature alone.

Benjamin Franklin, "le bon Quaker," delighted Parisian society not merely on account of his sagacity and wit but also because he contrived to appear as a backwoods philosopher, a man whose wisdom was as intuitive, as much the result of an unspoiled environment, as that of an Indian chief. He fostered the view that he was by no means unique in his self-culture. "The famous Franklin has told us," said one French journalist, "that there is no working-man in Philadelphia who does not read the newspapers at lunch-time and a few good works of philosophy or politics for an hour after dinner."

At this juncture Crèvecoeur published his *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782) and declared—with such an uncanny appropriateness that one is tempted to dismiss the passage as a fake concocted by some later propagandist—that a new type of man, the American, was in the making: a glorious amalgam of all types of men, actuated by new principles and behaving in new ways. In the expanded French edition, published a year after, Crèvecoeur took the idea still further. His sentiments indicate the European tendency to express their vision of America in oracular and theoretical terms. If this is not exactly what the American *is* like (and it was not for Crèvecoeur, a man well aware of frontier squalor, and so disturbed by the Revolution that he remained a loyalist), then it is at least what the American *ought* to be like, *must* become.

The Land of Liberty. The story developed with such an air of rightness that prophecy and destiny seemed to be identical. Success was deserved and therefore attained. The rebellious colonies secured their independence. The State of Nature became the United States, the Land of Liberty. "The genuine Liberty on which America is founded," declared the English writer Thomas Pownall in 1783, "is totally and entirely a New system of Things and men." Madame de Staël, one of Europe's dominant intellectual figures, toyed with the idea of transferring her *salon* to America. In England, Coleridge and his friends spoke of establishing their ideal "pantisocracy" in the New World. While becoming the Land of Liberty, the United States produced two heroes for the world to wonder at. One was Franklin (whose autobiography, incidentally, was among Kafka's favourite books). The other was the exemplary George Washington. Even the defeated British paid tribute to Washington's coolness and tenacity. The whole of Europe marvelled at his subsequent patriotism and modesty, in retiring from military command, then in returning with obvious reluctance to lead the new nation as its first President under its new constitution, and finally in retiring unbidden into private life once more. "Virtue," according to Montesquieu, was a feature of republics, whereas monarchical societies valued "honour." He seemed to be correct. Washington's career revealed a republican morality of a standard rarely achieved even in the splendid days of classical antiquity.

If Franklin and Washington were praised as virtuous statesmen, they were also celebrated as revolutionaries. The Land of Liberty haunted the imagination of European radicals. The American experiment was held to demonstrate that armed rebellion against authority was possible: citizen soldiers led by amateurs could beat professional armies. It was thought to prove that a federal republican democracy was a feasible form of government, though to conservative eyes this was the least workable and most objectionable of all blends of government. The United States stood for the right of revolution, for the likelihood of victory in revolution, and as the living exemplar of egalitarianism. So when the Russian radical Bakunin paid a visit to America in 1861, having escaped from Siberia, he carried back across the Atlantic a copy of the autograph of that great fellow-revolutionary, George Washington. For liberals and radicals in Western Europe the United States was a perennial bench mark. In England, an exasperated Conservative Member of Parliament said that the Radical M.P. John Bright never contributed to a Commons debate without dragging in the United States. Indeed, the United States of the mid-19th century occupied a place in the emotions of men such as Bright similar to that occupied seventy years later, in the emotions of their spiritual heirs, by the Soviet Union. It was, they insisted, a country founded on utterly novel and unimpeachably pure doctrine. Humanity had been given a fresh start and was no longer subject to the frailties of the Old

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World. In America everything was either perfect or perfectible. Hence, no criticism was applicable. For Bright and his associates it was truly the Land of Liberty when it guaranteed (in his words) "A free church, a free school, free land, a free vote, and a free career for the child of the humblest born in the land."

It was this shining image that lured the potential emigrant. In leaving his own country he asserted his belief in the superiority of the United States. Even if he failed to find all that he dreamed of, his letters home tended to suppress the disappointment. How could he admit that he had duped himself? Even if, like hundreds of thousands of others he eventually returned to the Old Country, the emigrant retained and transmitted his vision of an ideal place. In describing a village in southern Italy as it was during the 1930's, Carlo Levi speaks also for poor men in Greece and other parts of Europe:

> Their other world is America. . . . America, to the peasants, has a dual nature. It is a land where a man goes to work, where he toils and sweats for his daily bread, . . . where he can die and no one will remember him. At the same time, and with no contradiction, in terms, it is an earthly paradise and the promised land.

Europe's Future: Democracy. Even before the American Revolution the contrast between the "New" and "Old" worlds was explained as a contrast between the future and the past. "Westward the course of empire takes its way," according to Bishop Berkeley in 1726 (in what must be one of the most frequently quoted lines in the whole of literature). The English traveller, Andrew Burnaby, who came to the colonies a generation later, remarked that

> An idea, strange as it is visionary, has entered into the minds of the generality of mankind, that empire is travelling westward: and everyone is looking forward with eager and impatient expectation to that destined moment when America is to give the law to the rest of the world.

In 1776 the Abbé Galiani wrote from Naples to a friend in Paris:

> The epoch has become one of the total fall of Europe, and of trans-migration into America. All here turns into rottenness,—religion, laws, arts, sciences,—and all hastens to renew itself in America. This is not a jest; nor is it an idea drawn from the English quarrels; I have said it . . . for more than twenty years, and I have constantly seen my prophecies come to pass. Therefore, do not buy your house in the Chaussée d'Antin; you must buy it in Philadelphia.

The idea became more specific during the 19th century. The United States was in the van of progress, Europe's only hope lay in trying to follow in the same direction. In his *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (1835, 1840), the most influential of all the European interpretations of the New World, Alexis de Tocqueville viewed the United States as a laboratory of egalitarianism, as Europe's probable destiny. It was a generous analysis. Yet he doubted whether the Union could long survive the centrifugal strains that threatened it. Sure enough, the Union did begin to break apart in 1860. But for Americanophiles such as John Bright the triumph of the North during the Civil War gave still another proof of the invincible power of the democratic ideal. Destiny could be defined as the inevitable victory of good causes. Who could now doubt the stability of the United States, the missionary force of its spirit, when it was able to overthrow so vast and militant a conspiracy? And when it also put an end to slavery—hitherto the one dark passage in an otherwise unblemished record? Fifty years after Tocqueville, in an equally generous but less conjectural testimony, *The American Commonwealth* (1888), James Bryce is also ready to interpret America as Europe's future:

> America has in some respects anticipated European nations. She is walking before them along a path which they may probably follow. She carries behind her . . . a lamp whose light helps those who come after her more than it always does herself.

Bryce had to reckon with the sordid aspects of America in the Gilded Era. But he can explain these away as the mistakes of the pioneer grappling with the unfamiliar. They are temporary and incidental, not fundamental defects. On the whole Lord Bryce, we might say, has seen the future in the United States, and is quite sure that it works. To idealism have been added experience and stability. Unlike some other countries, America

> is made all of a piece; its institutions are the product of its economic and social conditions and the expression of its character. The . . . vehicle has been built with a lightness, strength, and elasticity which fit it for the roads it has to traverse.

Heroes. In waging the Civil War, not only America but all the world acquired another,

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third hero in the person of Abraham Lincoln. Franklin, Washington, Lincoln: what European nation even in a history ten times as extensive as that of the young United States could claim a trio which held any comparable significance for mankind?

This strong, confident land was to offer two more possible candidates for world-veneration during the 20th century. One was Woodrow Wilson, the "Meester Veelson" who brought the prospect of a just and lasting peace to Europe, even if the hope was in vain. *Wilson, apôtre et martyr*—apostle and martyr!—was the title of a biography written by a Frenchman in 1933. The second was Franklin D. Roosevelt, a leader who in the judgment of a great many Europeans (if with not quite so much unanimity among his own countrymen) could do no wrong. In the homes of the peasants of Lucania where Carlo Levi was summoned as a doctor, "what never failed to strike me... were the eyes of the two inseparable guardian angels that looked from the wall over the bed." These were the local Madonna, and F.D.R.:

> I never saw other pictures or images than these: not the King nor the Duce, nor even Garibaldi; no famous Italian of any kind, nor any one of the appropriate saints; only Roosevelt and the Madonna of Viggiano never failed to be present. To see them there... in cheap prints, they seemed the two faces of the power that has divided the universe between them.... Sometimes a third image formed, along with these two, a trinity: a dollar bill, the last of those brought back from across the sea, or one that had come in the letter of a husband or relative, was tacked up,... like the Holy Ghost or an ambassador from heaven to the world of the dead.

The Villainous Image

THE DISCOVERY of America was an affront as well as a miracle: an affront to scholarship and morality. For each of the heroic images there has existed a hostile antithesis. Again, these hostile images often have little or nothing to do with a "real" America. Naturally enough, they are projections of European problems. Against the dream of an Earthly Paradise may be set the coarse invention called Cockaigne. The Noble Savage?—there is a contrary version, of what we might call the Ignoble Savage. The Land of Liberty has been depicted as something that could be labelled the Land of Libertinism. In place of the notion that America anticipates Europe's democratic future there is the alarmed conviction that the United States foreshadows Europe's fate—the fate pejoratively styled "Americanisation." In contrast to the list of American world-heroes there is a list of American world-villains; and a list of world-martyrs, Americans whose sad experiences are cited as evidence of the cruelty and hypocrisy of the vaunted Land of Liberty. Each of these counter-images deserves a brief examination.

COCKAIGNE. The French *fabliau* of the 13th century, *Cocaigne*, may have been written to deride the fable of Avalon, the mythical island of the blest. In any case, to mediæval Europe "Cocaigne" or "Cockaigne" represented an imaginary country, situated somewhere in the West, where no one need work or worry. The very landscape was made of food; birds dropped from the air already prepared for eating. (The Big Rock-Candy Mountain is a modern equivalent.) Cockaigne, also known as Lubberland, was a poor man's paradise and the fable has a certain charm. But it is also a self-indulgent dream, of glut and gluttony, of life lived through the belly instead of the mind. I do not know whether America has often been explicitly identified with Cockaigne (though William Byrd of Virginia did refer to the back country of the early 18th century as Lubberland, perhaps in a somewhat different sense). But the notion clearly underlies European conceptions of American abundance, waste, and vulgarity. Cockaigne is the mediæval prototype of the Affluent Society (or at least of its sillier and nastier aspects such as the TV "give-away" show). The stupefied Flemish peasants whom Brueghel painted in his scenes of Cockaigne (*Schlaraffenland*) are the ancestors of the greedy, idiotic creatures caricatured to-day in *Mad* magazine.

THE IGNOBLE SAVAGE. To the European conservative preoccupied by the problem of achieving and maintaining order in society, or to the European scholar conscious of the gradual, difficult stages by which knowledge is accumulated: to such people the Noble Savage is a dangerous and preposterous myth. Can men be wise without study, without due reverence for the past? Can they grow intellect as a plant produces flowers, merely by being? "Don't cant in defence of savages," Dr. Johnson said irrit-

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ably in 1784 to the more sanguine Boswell, when Boswell tried to tell him of the innate, untutored sensibility of men raised in a state of nature. What *could* come out of a raw new country like the United States? The answer of the Irish poet, Thomas Moore, who toured there in 1803–04, was sharp:

> *Take Christians, Mohawks, Democrats and all*
> *From the rude wigwam to the congress hall,*
> *From man the savage, whether slaved or free,*
> *To man the civilised, less tame than he,—*
> *'Tis one dull chaos, one infertile strife*
> *Between half polished and half barbarous life.*

So much for Crèvecoeur and the 18th-century portrait of a land of simple, virtuous citizens destined to grow until the American example governed the universe.

The attack was mounted with more apparent scholarly precision in the work of Jean-Louis Buffon and Corneille de Pauw. What lessons did America hold for the naturalist? How could its species be classified? What of its aborigines? Buffon's *Histoire naturelle* (1761) and some other treatises argued that America's "newness," scientifically speaking, connoted immaturity. Animals and humans alike were inferior to those of the "Old" World, for climatic and other reasons. Moreover, this handicap was not lessening but increasing. It could be traced in the degeneration of animal species, including breeds of cattle that had been introduced from Europe. It was evident in the life-cycle of the Indians, who decayed rapidly in physique and intellect after a seemingly vigorous childhood and adolescence. The deterioration, it was argued, affected the white settler in his turn. Peter Kalm, a Swedish scientist who travelled through North America in the mid-18th century, believed that the colonists matured earlier and died earlier than did Europeans. De Pauw, following Kalm and Buffon in a series of essays—including a notorious contribution on the condition of America for the 1776 edition of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*—was sure that the colonists were less energetic and intelligent than their European contemporaries. "It has not been observed," he said, "that the professors of the University of Cambridge in New England have educated any young Americans to the point of being able to display them in the Old World." The Abbé Raynal, in the first edition (1770) of his *Histoire philosophique et politique*, reproduced De Pauw's views, though he was later to modify them. Emphasising the decadence of the English settlers, he asserted that

> their minds have been enervated like their bodies. Quick and penetrating at first, they grasp ideas easily; but they cannot concentrate nor accustom themselves to prolonged reflection. It is amazing that America has not yet produced a good poet, a capable mathematician, or a man of genius in a single art or a single science. Almost all have some facility in everything, but none has a marked talent for anything. Precocious and mature before us, they are far behind when we have reached our full mental development.

So, in that most crucial year 1776, a European like De Pauw could maintain that mankind in America was suffering a fatal decline, through the insidious effects of heat and humidity. Though they have offered different explanations for the phenomenon, Europeans have kept on noting it ever since. Precocity and superficiality!—Raynal's observations have been repeated over and over, though without awareness of their parentage.

THE LAND OF LIBERTINISM. "The fever is in Europe, the remedy is in America," according to Voltaire. But some would turn the statement round. Consider, for instance, the old argument over the origins of syphilis. A Hessian soldier, stationed in South Carolina during the American Revolution, noted that the New World had conferred upon Germany the blessing of cheap food in the shape of the potato plant. "Columbus," he went on, "brought in exchange for this very useful food venereal diseases, a deplorable bargain for the Americans!" We recognise here a classic confrontation: corrupt Europe, innocent and benevolent America.

But others believe the opposite—that syphilis, unknown in Europe until the 1490's, was unwittingly brought back by Columbus's sailors through intercourse with Caribbean women. (It has also been argued that though Europe owes the potato to *South* America, the vegetable was introduced in *North* America from Europe.) Here is the opposite confrontation. Unlucky Europe, tainted America—the place of contagion of every sort, physical, moral, ideological.

From *this* virulent America of the European imagination spread not only the poisons of revolution and democratic misrule but also the social disorders of the frontier West, the plantation South, and the urban North. In fact the image dates from colonial days. America is the

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haunt of pirates in a far-from-cosy J. M. Barrie-ish sense. It is the dumping-ground for Britain's criminals and paupers, and continues to be the domain of outlaws, bad-hats, remittance-men, misfits. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch* the unspeakable Mr. Raffles is sent off to America with "an adequate sum," in the hope and expectation that he will "remain there for life." In this context "life" is an ambiguous word. "Life in the New World" has the ring of a prison-sentence. (To the dismay of his patron Raffles returns to England, explaining that "Things went confoundedly with me in New York; those Yankees are cool hands, and a man of gentlemanly feelings has no chance with them.") Raffles is despatched to the America of Andrew Jackson, *circa* 1830. Half-a-century afterwards the Scandinavian Hans Mattson writes:

> It cannot be denied that many among the higher classes in Sweden feel very unfriendly towards the United States, and it was even not long ago a common saying among them, "America is the paradise of all rogues and rascals."

In this image, the United States was given over to libertinism. Sir Lepel Henry Griffin, a British observer who lacked the amiability of James Bryce, printed on the title-page of his *The Great Republic* (1884) two harsh quotations that epitomise the tone of the book:

> "The Commonwealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts."—*Timon of Athens.*
> "O Liberté! que de crimes on commet en ton nom."—*Jeanne-Marie Roland.*

In the America that Griffin saw and that others have scrutinised, whites gouged, stabbed, lynched, and duelled with one another. They committed still more brutal outrages upon the Negro. They hunted down the Indian. In their cities votes were bought and sold with shameless cynicism. Only in the remote, backward corners of Europe such as Sicily was there a comparable record of brigandage; Murder Incorporated in the 20th century might be affiliated with the Sicilian *Mafia* but certainly had nothing to learn from it. From England the French language borrowed such peaceable nouns as *le weekend*, from the United States the altogether more stringent vocabulary of *le gangster*.

One scholar, Durand Echeverria, suggests that in France—and his theory would apply in part to other European countries—this kind of image of America has not changed except in detail from the 18th century to the present day. In books like Georges Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future* (published in English as *America the Menace*, 1931), or Simone de Beauvoir's *L'Amérique au jour le jour* (*America Day by Day*, 1953) there is undoubtedly a predilection for the uglier sides of American life, including crime, miscegenation (or rather, its consequences), rape, drunkenness, and murder. Liberty or Libertinism?

"I have in my pocket," says Duhamel, speaking of the American five-cent piece, "several of your small coins on which is stamped the word 'liberty.' And what do you see immediately under that word? The figure of a buffalo or an Indian. Oh, irony! They represent two free and spirited races that you have destroyed in less than three centuries."

Europe's Fate: Americanisation. Uncle Sham, Uncle Shylock: where it is not a question of American violence, the image is of a hypocritical, timid, joyless people, absorbed not in the pursuit of happiness—itself a vain quest, according to European critics—but in the even emptier pursuit of wealth. Charles Dickens popularised the expression "the Almighty Dollar" in his *American Notes* (1840). But the idea had long been in circulation. The Frenchman Louis-Félix de Beaujour, for example, offered an almost standard comment on the United States that he saw during the first decade of the 19th century:

> Virtue has been regarded as the guiding principle or principal strength of republics. That of the American Republic appears to be a frantic love of money. It is the result of the political equality which reigns there and which, leaving people with no other distinction except wealth, invites them to acquire it by every possible means.

The protracted squabble over war debts after 1918 did a great deal to intensify the European image of America as Uncle Shylock.

By the 1850's, when the word "Americanisation" came generally into European usage, it was not enough merely to deplore what was thought to go on across the Atlantic. This contagion too was spreading. Far from America taking over the tasks of civilisation and pointing a better way for poor old Europe, it was now argued that Europe was the repository of a precious civilisation and that this was being

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assailed by transatlantic barbarism. The image grew of a decadent, avaricious United States in which everything, including love, was standardised, homogenised, and de-humanised. Cash was the measure of worth, quantity had become a value. America was afflicted with consumption, in fact galloping consumption—not a medical but an economic and moral disease. Food was Fletcherised, production lines were Taylorised. Indeed, with the advent of the automat and the assembly-line the image became more precise. It was of a gadget and machine civilisation, without savour or individuality.

So in the inverted Utopia of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, prayers were addressed not to Our Lord but to Our Ford. And in the years after World War II both radicals and conservatives in Europe, who might find it difficult to agree on any other issue, could rally round the accusation that the United States was, consciously or unconsciously, tending to "coca-colonise" the rest of mankind. In *L'Américanisme et nous* (1958), Cyrille Arnavon contends that the attempt is deliberate and insidious—whether one examines the operations of NATO or of the United States Information Service, or even whether one takes into account the publication of a French edition of *Reader's Digest* (a perusal of which apparently stimulated M. Arnavon to write his book).

Such views drew additional ammunition from the fact that in the 20th century radicals no longer looked to the United States for a lead. That role had been usurped, at least for a spell, by the Soviet Union. To the extent that the United States still symbolised the future, then, it seemed to stand for an anti-Utopia, rich and yet bankrupt. Apart from the dubious boon of "Americanisation" the United States could be defined as a backward nation. That at any rate was the assumption in Harold Laski's *The American Democracy* (1948): lacking a left-wing political party, the United States was at a primitive stage of evolution and was bound to recapitulate the experiences of wiser if sadder European nations. Russian successes in outer space, since 1957, have reinforced the image of America as a nation that is no longer a dream and not even a *technologically* supreme nightmare.

VILLAINS—OR MARTYRS. Five heroes—Franklin, Washington, Lincoln, Wilson, Roosevelt. But not quite everyone accepted these. The poet John Keats, writing in 1818 to his brother who had just emigrated to the United States, said:

> Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectibil(it)y Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off—I differ there with him greatly—A country like the United States whose greatest men are Franklins and Washingtons will never do that—They are great Men doubtless but how are they to be compared to those of our countreymen Milton and the two Sidneys—The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims the other sold the very charger who had taken him through all his Battles. Those Americans are great but they are not sublime Man—the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime. . . .

If there was some dispute as to the stature of America's heroes, there was widespread agreement that America had produced villains for the whole world to shudder at, though of course none as horrendous as a Hitler. Perhaps it would be better to say groups of villains: the Robber Barons (Rockefeller, etc.), the Gangsters (Al Capone and the rest), the Demagogues (Joseph McCarthy especially), the Imperialists (headed, I suppose, by John Foster Dulles). There were, too, America's martyrs, the victims of national villainy, whose stories echo far beyond the borders of the United States: the Haymarket anarchists; perhaps Eugene Debs; certainly Sacco and Vanzetti, and the Rosenbergs, and Caryl Chessman.

From the faces in these galleries there builds up a total villainous image of the United States, an image which of course owes much to Marxist colouration and the recent stresses of the Cold War but which had its first adumbration several centuries ago. It is of a gross, rapacious Uncle Sam, leering, fanged, squatting on money-bags, clutching the Bomb. We may set against it the Uncle Sam in a *New Yorker* cartoon of 1958. This one is a scrawny figure, in traditional stars-and-stripes regalia that hang loose upon him, stretched out upon an analyst's couch and declaring plaintively, *"Everybody hates me."*

Current Fashions in Imagery

IT SEEMS CLEAR that the heroic image of America has tended to yield to the villainous image, and it might seem that the tendency will continue. Human beings are always dissatisfied in some degree with their own society. They therefore devise nostalgic or radical images

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of superior societies. The nostalgic images relate to bygone times and far-off places where life is simpler and purer than they conceive their own existence to be. The radical images usually relate to the future, or to some other contemporary society which has a special stake in the future, where the form of life already appears better than one's own and likely to become immeasurably better.

Both of these kinds of image used to apply to the United States. The nostalgic one has now, we might think, almost vanished, while the radical one has lost most of its excitement. Large-scale immigration is at an end; we perceive the accidental relevance of Kafka's description of the Statue of Liberty, which—no doubt through sheer ignorance—he equips with a sword instead of a torch. In *The Irony of American History* (1952) Reinhold Niebuhr concludes that much of America's radical thunder has been stolen by Russia. To-day the majority of even friendly assessments of the United States dwell upon its loss of nerve: *Americans Are Alone in the World* (1953), by Luigi Barzini, Jr., is a case in point. There is something a little inert about a recent book such as *Image of America* (1959), by R. L. Bruckberger, an intelligent and well-informed French Dominican priest who sings the praises of American economic democracy in a way akin to the survey of the "permanent revolution" conducted by the editors of *Fortune*.

In the absence of either a nostalgic or a radical vision of America we may wonder whether *any* compelling image exists, other than that of bigness—of military and industrial mass, of the United States as the ponderous captain of Our Side in the dreary exchanges of the Cold War. One perhaps, but not an edifying one: in an essay on "The Erotic Myth of America," the English anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer comments on the French appetite for sleazy novels like Boris Vian's *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*, a work allegedly "traduit de l'Américain" but actually written by M. Vian. In such a genre, which also includes *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (by René Raymond, under the American-sounding pseudonym "James Hadley Chase"), America is still a fantasy-land but of the most debased and vicious sort—"pays de cocagne," says Vian in his introduction, "la terre d'élection des puritains, des alcooliques, et de l'enfoncez-vous-bien-ça dans la tête." A hundred years ago Frenchmen enjoyed Fenimore Cooper's lone wolf, Natty Bumppo. Now, it seems, they pass off as American their own morbid lone-wolf obsessions of killing and rape.

Anti-Americanism?

ARTICLES that deal with external views of America are apt to slide into discussions of anti-Americanism. Why, the American reader asks, *why* such a lineage of error and hostility? He may be ready to concede that all human groups have fanciful images of one another, that these are usually out-of-date, and that they are almost invariably unfavourable. He may realise that "top-dog" nations, as Malcolm Muggeridge calls them, are particularly subject to misrepresentation, and that America must, therefore, expect to suffer from the *Schadenfreude* of a declining Europe. But having made these concessions he may still insist unhappily that the images of his country differ in kind, not merely in degree, from the images that European countries entertain of one another. To be "Anglicised" or "Hellenised" was never as dreadful, in general estimation, as to be "Americanised." Why must America serve as a scapegoat for Europe's own weaknesses? Why must Europeans blame America for imposing upon them a mass culture which they in fact eagerly accept and even "improve" upon?

Many answers could be offered. There is no doubt that malice and envy play a part, as well as Communist propaganda. But it is useful to remind Americans of their own venerable tradition of xenophobia. Almost from the beginning the New World has explicitly repudiated the Old, defining its own virtues as the precise antithesis of the supposed vices of Europe. It has not often occurred to Americans, until lately, to consider whether this gratifying polarity was altogether true, or what reactions it might arouse in the breasts of the repudiated. "We will bury you" was the burden of America's message to Europe long before Mr. Khrushchev employed it in a different context. What is it like to be consigned to the graveyard of history, especially when one does not *feel* dead? "Twisting the lion's tail" was once thought to be a reliable vote-raising technique for American politicians. What of the lion's own discomfort? If we were compiling a balance-sheet of denigration, American Anglophobia would more than offset instances of British anti-Americanism. It is not surprising then that Europeans should retaliate: that they should pounce upon every discrepancy between American promise and

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American performance, especially when the promise is proclaimed with such grandiosity. American self-righteousness is reminiscent of that of the British, which did not endear them to Continental Europeans and which generated similar charges of hypocrisy. If the kettle did not claim to be quite so stainless the pot might not search so eagerly for evidences of the kettle's blackness.

However, this sort of *tu quoque* debate is valueless for our immediate purposes, except that it leads to an important qualification—namely, that America has never been a "real," finite place to Americans themselves. There has always been a close correspondence between European *projected* images of America, and American *self*-images. The United States has been a fantasy to itself: something in process, something mysterious and abstract, a democratic vista, a "willingness of the heart," and so on. What ambitious assessment of his country by an American does not try to explore its fabled quality, its mission and meaning, its search for identity, its appeal to the future tense—in short, the American Dream, which Americans refer to more often than Europeans do?*

Similarly, the American Nightmare is a prime domestic topic. If the heroic image is cherished by Americans the villainous image has not been neglected. There is no anti-Americanism as eloquent as that of the native American. From the strictures of Federalist authors like Joseph Dennie, through the anger of abolitionists and of their Southern opponents, all the way down the decades to H. L. Mencken and his "booboisie," the Dos Passos of *U.S.A.*, the Henry Miller of *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, the cartoons of *Mad* magazine, or the Allen Ginsberg of *Howl*: throughout the history of the United States the villainous image has to a considerable extent been a home-produced product. Like European critics, but with a bitterer sense of disappointment, they have been irritated by the disparity between *ought* and *is*. American life does have repellent features, and Americans have said so with a fine ferocity. Are not Europeans entitled to do the same? If Sinclair Lewis wrote *Babbitt* why should not C. E. M. Joad write *The Babbitt Warren* (an inferior book, alas)? Why should not Jean-Paul Sartre be allowed a play about lynching in the South (*La putain respectueuse*) when William Faulkner has published a novel about France (*A Fable*)? Is Faulkner's France—or his South, for that matter—more "real" than Sartre's America? If an *Ugly American* by William J. Lederer and Eugene Burdick, why not a *Quiet American* by Graham Greene? Are the sadisms of Boris Vian different in any crucial respect from those of Mickey Spillane: do not the European and American publics derive the same satisfactions from such literature?

* For example: "There are those, I know, who will reply that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind, is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is. It is the American Dream." Archibald MacLeish, on "The National Purpose," *New York Times*, May 30th, 1960, p. 14.

Real America

So far, we have suggested that (a) America has never been "real" for Europeans; (b) European images of America have usually been *either* highly favourable *or* markedly pejorative; (c) pejoratives have prevailed lately over favourable images; and (d) America has never been quite "real" for Americans either: they too have expressed extremes of admiration and anger (consider the literary career of Mark Twain, moving in one direction—glorification to disgust; and of Dos Passos, moving in the opposite direction—disgust to glorification).

These reflections leave us nowhere very much, unless we add two other comments. The first has to do with the peculiar *efficacy* of the images I have enumerated. Some of them are manifestly unhistorical. Most bear palpable marks of prejudice: thus, Corneille de Pauw was in the hire of Frederick the Great, a monarch who was anxious to discourage emigration. Most versions of America, including that of Tocqueville, rest upon *a priori* reasoning. But no one has shown profounder insight than this French theorist, on the basis of his single visit to the United States. Surely we must conclude that he was correct to see in America more than America. Surely there is a poetic if not a literal truth in almost all the sequences of heroic and villainous images, and in their dramatic contrast. Even the views of De Pauw and Raynal on American precocity—silly, unscientific, Europe-oriented—have their relevance. We still catch the refrain: we hear it, for instance, in the much-quoted remark by Scott Fitzgerald that there are no second acts in American lives.

In sum, these are surely "true" sets of images of a continent and a nation which has held in suspension all the extreme possibilities—hopes and fears alike—for the future of mankind

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under democracy, and which continues to enact them for itself and for much of Europe and the rest of the world, despite the apparent drastic qualifications of the present time. Only America has this symbolic function for Western society. Soviet Communism has never provided so wide a range; and if the American heroic image has become dulled, what are we to say of the Soviet image? The god that failed is Communism. The deities and devils of American democracy still fascinate Europeans. Much of its high gloss may have gone, but its problems are of more immediate interest than ever.

In other words—to come to the second and final point—the images of America are now of *half*-gods and *half*-devils. The United States is less loved but more liked; more criticised but less hated. It has become more "real," and so our initial proposition is far less *apropos* than formerly. The relationship of America and Europe has greatly changed in the past half-century. The story is no longer of American repudiation and European condescension. The contest is no longer between America and Europe, nor even perhaps of America-plus-allies versus the Communist bloc. There are several blocs in to-day's world. North America and Western Europe are only two of them, yet two whose similarities are far greater than their differences. Both are highly industrialised and mobile societies. Their mutual involvements continually increase. We can still find absurd accounts of what America is presumed to be. But there is a growing number of expert European studies of the United States—of its politics, industry, history, literature, music, art, architecture. Europe's foremost living authority on the United States is Denis Brogan, and he is often compared with Tocqueville and Bryce. The comparison is just. But his tone is different. He *knows* infinitely more than Tocqueville did about the American scene, and considerably more than the esteemed Bryce; he is as capable as the next man of generalising, but his approach is microscopic rather than macroscopic.

The great mythological and metaphorical European interpretations of America have ceased. D. H. Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923) may have been the last of them. This does not mean that Europeans have ceased to talk about the United States in broad terms. It means that when they do so their authorities, their large labels, are all American. Current European magazines are crammed with observations on the Lonely Crowd, the Power Elite, the Organisation Man, the Status-Seekers, the Affluent Society. Each is the coinage of an American author: David Riesman, C. Wright Mills, William H. Whyte, Jr., Vance Packard, J. K. Galbraith. For American literature, the grand theory is provided not by Europeans but by Americans: Perry Miller, Harry Levin, Philip Rahv, Richard Chase, Leslie Fiedler, Henry Nash Smith.

EUROPEAN IMAGES OF AMERICA, always closer than is commonly admitted, have now almost coincided with American self-images; and the Americans are the principal image-makers. The United States will continue to be a semi-mythical place for Europeans, but mainly to the extent that Americans see it thus. To the extent that the myth is rich, alive, and honest, so will be the European view. To the extent that it is commercial, vapid, and meretricious, so will it seem to Europeans. America will continue to be blamed excessively whenever something goes wrong. That is America's punishment and privilege for being an imaginary as well as a real country.

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Philip Williams

The French Army

Or: "The Collapse of Soldierly Ideals"

"ALGERIA," wrote the left-wing editor of *L'Express* early in August,

> ... is the one political problem over which, in France, men are ready to die.... On the Right and on the Left are only weariness, resignation, a kind of fatalism and shrinking into oneself. But over Algeria there does exist a category of Frenchmen ready for the last sacrifice. And what a category! Those who control physical force, the Army.

Before the second World War the French officer corps had been mainly drawn from social and religious groups which were hostile to the existing political régime. Yet the army, despite Republican suspicions, remained obedient and loyal, *la grande muette*. The defeat of 1940 shattered that tradition. After General de Gaulle's appeal, honour and discipline (to quote Colonel Argoud, a leader in last April's *putsch*) were henceforward on opposite sides and every soldier had to choose. At the trial of Major Denoix de Saint-Marc for taking over Algiers with his regiment in the *putsch*, a priest who had gone through Buchenwald with the defendant appeared as a character witness. "For our generation," he said, "there are no fixed values."[1]

Indo-China and Algeria completed the alienation of the army. The state of mind of the most rebellious element, the parachutist officers, is well portrayed in Jean Lartéguy's semi-documentary novel, *The Centurions* (Hutchinson). The author, himself a former officer in a parachutist regiment, follows a group of his old comrades from Dien-Bien-Phu to the "battle of Algiers" in 1957. Most of his characters are left-wing types: Raspéguy the Basque colonel, proud of his peasant origins and loathing General Franco; Esclavier the son of a *Front Populaire* professor, who joined the Resistance at sixteen and was tortured by the Germans; Pinières the former F.F.I. leader; Merle, the youngster in revolt against his dreary provincial bourgeois family, who is always proclaiming that he is really a civilian who hates the army; Dia the jovial Negro doctor who acts as a confessor to them all. In Indo-China they find "a useless squandering of heroism, suffering, weariness, and death, while corruption, rackets, and general staffs were doing well." At home, military secrets were being leaked to the anti-war press; political parties were raising funds through the currency racket; hospitals in France were promising donors not to use their blood for soldiers wounded in the "filthy war." Cut off from their own people, the army reacted bitterly to the humiliation of defeat. And in this mood they went through the Viet-minh prison camps and the experience of Communist indoctrination. They were forced into unwonted introspection.

> At Dien-Bien-Phu, Julien had met officers who said they were in the war simply because those were their orders. It took the defeat to make them look retrospectively for their reasons . . . dismissing for the first time that myth of discipline which the defeat of 1940, the Resistance, and the Liberation, had emptied of all its meaning.

[1] This and other quotations and evidence are from the "barricades trial" (November, 1960, to March, 1961; also two long letters arising out of it from Colonel Broizat to *Le Monde*) and the "*putsch* trials" (June to September, 1961). Colonel Argoud's evidence at the former, given in camera, was published (with comments) by the left-wing Editions de Minuit under the title *Sans Commentaire*; its authenticity has not been denied, and the government has seized most copies.

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LOOKING FOR THE REASONS WHY they had lost to a weaker army, Lartéguy's officers pointed to the Communist success in mobilising against them the energies of a whole people. Then, personally subjected in their prison camps to the pressures of Communist reindoctrination, they discovered for themselves a new military technique. They emerged convinced that they alone understood the enemy who threatened the comfortable existence of their unheeding compatriots.

"Yes," says Esclavier, "our development has been going on out of touch with our country—and for the first time it seems to me that we, the soldiers, are ahead—for the first time for centuries."

Returning to France, they were plunged almost at once into the Algerian conflict. Convinced that they alone had grasped both the stake and the methods of this new form of war, they set out to create an entirely new kind of revolutionary force from the mutinous conscripts under their command. One of the most interesting passages in the novel describes the combination of physical isolation, intensive training, and active propaganda used to enlist the men in a kind of militant sect—a unity because the officers lived and slept, worked and suffered, alongside the troops.[2]

In Indo-China, says the "political commissar,"

> we felt ourselves rejected by the nation. We don't want any more of that. We must form a popular army through which we can recover communion with the people. That's why you conscripts are infinitely more important to us than the volunteers who are more or less mercenaries.

Yet the first stage to this communion with the people was to turn the people's sons against civil society and civilian authority. And the result was a state within the state. As one real parachutist officer has put it,

> We like war and we are tooled up for it; we have our chaplains to bless us before the battle and to put us underground after it, our *toubibs* (doctors) to treat us, our quartermasters to feed us and our courts to judge us if we don't behave according to the laws in force among us.[3]

Last July in Metz, after two parachutists were killed in a terrorist raid, hundreds of their fellows beat up all the Moslems they could find, killing several; much later, the police arrested the real terrorists. According to an official statement ninety per cent of the troops involved were conscripts.

The Centurions ends with the "battle of Algiers." Bombs at the bus-stops and in the big stores were reducing the city to chaos; lynch-mobs were out and a violent clash between the communities was imminent. The 10th Parachutist Division was brought in, and told to use "every means"—without legal or moral restrictions—to break the terrorists. "Repressing those out-of-date notions which at once make Western man great and prevent him, nowadays, from defending himself," they did as they were told. But after the danger was over, they were condemned by politicians who had willed the end but preferred not to know about the means.[4] "Whenever a minister or a deputy came to H.Q.," says Raspéguy,

> I told them, "It's done round the corner. It's disgusting, it's heart-rending, but we do it because your government has ordered us to." Some of them pretended not to understand or to think I was joking—others replied with an unctuous little wave of the hand, "It's for France's sake." And now these same swine want to haul us in front of their courts.

Esclavier explodes, "Let Rome beware of the wrath of the legions." And the book ends with one of them remembering a phrase from his schooldays,

> They became the Emperor's pretorian guards until they began to choose Emperors from among their own ranks. And that was the end of Rome.

MANY OF THE SAME problems are discussed from an opposite viewpoint in P. H. Simon's much slighter *Portrait of an Officer* (Secker & Warburg). Jean de Larsan is a Bayard-like figure, who comes of an old military family, has never imagined himself

[2] "The only officers who were really close to their men were those of the parachute regiments," wrote an officer in *France-Observateur*, 4th May, 1961. And, "The best of our comrades are excluded from the army. The command will go to the most mediocre and conformist generals and colonels . . . who have never won any battles except battles for promotion . . . the 1939 army, only worse."

[3] From Claude Dufresnoy, *Des Officiers Parlent* (Julliard).

[4] The chairman of the official "watchdog committee" to protect civil liberties told a colleague of Argoud (he says in *Sans Commentaire*): ". . . send us up good files, even find us false witnesses, but cancel, for heaven's sake cancel that directive" authorising summary execution of prisoners.

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following any profession but soldiering, and believes that 20th-century warfare can still be conducted with chivalry. In Indo-China he again meets Brahim, his devoted Algerian sergeant and friend of the Tunisian and Italian campaigns, now a second-lieutenant, conscious of racial discrimination and unhappy about the war. Brahim is persuaded by Larsan not to resign the commission of which he had been so proud; four days later he is killed. When his son Kadour decides to join the army, Larsan takes him as his driver and regards him as a son. But the Algerian war poisons their relationship. Larsan will allow no torture in his unit; his superior, Dhagondange, reproaches him for being a "high-class soldier" but an "indifferent and troublesome officer" who produces no information. On orders, Larsan arrests all the males of a village where a murder was committed; he reports them not guilty, but still they are interned. Next time, he refuses to arrest innocent suspects; Dhagondange, pointing to "the soldier's golden rule of obedience," asks, "If you intend systematically to refer your actions to the arbitration of your private conscience... do you think you have the right to command a unit on active service?" Returning to his battalion, Larsan finds that his popular second-in-command has been killed and horribly mutilated in a supposedly friendly village, and that his furious subordinates have slaughtered half the inhabitants (there is an almost identical episode in *The Centurions*). Appalled by the massacre, Kadour deserts and delivers a truckload of arms to the F.L.N.; he gives himself up rather than kill Larsan. On the day of Kadour's execution, Larsan resigns his commission. We hear the echo of a real captain, Branca, in the *putsch* trials, lamenting "the collapse of my soldierly ideal." But Branca regarded resignation as "an egotistical solution."

One major problem of personal conduct is hardly touched upon by either Lartéguy or Simon. This is the responsibility of the officer to the local people whom he has sought, on instructions from above, to recruit to his side. The French knew—none better than the army—that they needed Moslem co-operation if they were to stay in Algeria. They enlisted soldiers (200,000 Moslems were armed by them) and persuaded civilians to take responsibility for running their own local affairs. Out in the *bled*, S.A.S. officers, engaged in purely constructive activities, bringing roads and schools and doctors to primitive areas which had never had them, had a good conscience about the work they were doing and the merits of their cause. But Moslems who co-operated were threatened by the F.L.N. The French officer who told them (as instructed) that France would never betray them was bound to feel that he had contracted a personal obligation. What could he say to the municipal councillor who, when reproached for paying F.L.N. taxes, replied:

> We all know you Frenchmen will soon be deserting us. We who have compromised ourselves with you, we shall stay here. My house will be burned, not yours; my children will have their throats cut, not yours.[5]

He could only swear to himself that this must never be allowed to happen. And he would swear it all the more forcibly if, like so many of the defendants in the *putsch* trials, he had already once, in Indo-China, given his own word and his country's to local friends of France who were soon to be abandoned to the reprisals of the Viet-minh.

To the personal problem of responsibility was added a practical problem of confidence which again impinged on politics. No sensible Moslem would work with the French unless he believed they really meant to stay. To give him that confidence was a political problem; to leave him without it made the army's task hopeless. So the greatest of military handicaps was political weakness; and the soldiers greeted the 13th May revolution with delight because it might at last settle the problem of confidence. Surely the Moslems would be convinced of French determination now that in Paris there was a strong government under a general they greatly respected, and in Algeria full powers of civil administration were concentrated in military hands. The referendum of September, 1958, seemed a golden opportunity to obtain an expression of this confidence through the integrationist slogan of *Algérie française*; the soldiers threw themselves enthusiastically into the campaign.

But a series of disappointments followed this triumph. First, De Gaulle would not commit himself to integration. Then he insisted (though ineffectively) on elections in which all shades

[5] Quoted by Raoul Girardet, *Algérie 1960* (articles from *Combat*). For a fascinating picture of operations in the *bled* and the problem of confidence as seen by a sophisticated and liberal officer, see Georges Buis's novel *La Grotte* (Julliard).

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of Moslem opinion could express themselves. And in September, 1959, he revived the problem of confidence and jeopardised the results of the referendum victory by promising another referendum on self-determination (his critics called it "no determination"). One activist, Colonel Broizat, lamented this "victory for the F.L.N." Another, Colonel Argoud, conceded that "no sensible person and certainly no officer" believed France could hold Algeria by force against a hostile people (except by Budapest methods which she would not use), but argued that, though self-determination was right in principle, while the war lasted it was disastrous, for it made Moslems fear that one day France might desert them.[1] "Men won't die for a question-mark."

The "barricades" insurrection of the Algiers Europeans, in January, 1960, gave a chance to put pressure on the government to reverse its policy. Both Argoud and Broizat warned their superiors that they would disobey (and tell others to disobey) an order to fire on the demonstrators. Broizat's paratroop regiment, moving at a crawl, arrived late at the square where the crowd had just shot down the gendarmes Broizat was supposed to be supporting. The insurgents had found complicities among officers who had not done their duty, said General Crépin; among the parachutists, complained the Algerian-born General Coste,

> an order is no longer an order, it's a basis for discussion.

But the group which meant by military disobedience to enforce a change of political policy was as yet small, and they failed to win over the commander-in-chief, General Challe. After a critical week, the President made a decisive broadcast; Argoud himself admitted that the army in the *bled* was impatient with the tolerance shown to the insurgents of Lagaillarde and Ortiz. Remembering the bitter wartime clashes in Syria and elsewhere, he and his colleagues resolved not to shatter the army's unity by openly defying the government.[1] But he was soon to regret his decision.[6]

For during 1960 the slide downhill became a headlong rush. In June the government agreed to talks with the F.L.N.—thus losing, the *ultras* believed, a splendid chance to obtain the military surrender of half the rebel army (the "Si Salah affair"). In September, 121 (later 200) prominent writers, teachers, and entertainers publicly excused the defendants in the "Jeanson trial" who had organised desertion from the army and assistance to the enemy. In November, President De Gaulle conceded the principal F.L.N. war aim, promising "the Algerian Republic"; in December, the Moslem city masses came out to demonstrate openly for the F.L.N.—and when the army command wanted to call in the parachutists, the civilian authorities (who had by now recovered their old powers) kept them out and tolerated the seditious demonstrations. At home, their political allies suffered crushing defeat at the referendum of January, 1961. Talks with the F.L.N. were about to be resumed without the previous cease-fire on which France had always insisted. The last straw was the press conference of 11th April, at which the President of the Republic, renouncing the nation's civilising mission, said that if negotiations failed France would stop pouring money down the Algerian drain; and if other Powers came in to take her place, "I wish them joy of it." The great patriotic cause in which men like Challe had so heavy an emotional investment was reduced to a sordid profit-and-loss account. To Boisfeuras in *The Centurions*,

> Algeria was the ball and chain attaching France to her great power role and forcing her to behave with more greatness and generosity than a Switzerland of to-day, a nation of merchants and fat bourgeois.

Now the wrong choice was being made by the very leader they had themselves chosen to ensure the right one. The *putsch* followed ten days later.

The men who made it were of very different types. Challe and his close associates "jumped on a moving train" after 11th April; but it had been set in motion much earlier by the five colonels, Argoud, Broizat, Gardes, Godard, and Lacheroy. Broizat had links with the far Catholic Right. But Argoud called himself a left-wing revolutionary,[6] while of Lacheroy and Godard (whose first command was in the famous Glières maquis) it was said that they "spit on the extreme Right, they are fascinated by a Tito."[7] Among the generals, Jouhaud was Algerian born; Zeller, an activist with no Algerian contacts, thought of himself as an old Republican from Alsace.[6] Salan, the time-server

[6] Interview (Argoud) and articles (J. Planchais and Lieut. X.) in *La Nef*, July, 1961.

[7] As a Gaullist officer told Jean Cau: *L'Express*, 27th July, 1961.

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with the left-wing past, was willing to use the Fascist O.A.S. (which had already murdered a few political opponents and threatened hundreds of others, with their families, both in Algeria and in France itself); Nicot, who thought that De Gaulle's was the only possible policy and that the *putsch* was bound to fail, feared that it would end in bloodshed if Salan and the colonels were left in control of it. Petit had won over the Algiers commanders to De Gaulle on 13th May; Challe (a wartime Gaullist who was thought to be politically leftish) had in January, 1960, persuaded his subordinates to obey the government on the strength of assurances which later proved false; both supported the self-determination policy, but both now felt an obligation to those they had unwittingly misled. On the other hand Faure, whose arrest seems to have scotched any *putsch* in France itself, had been first an ardent Pétainist, then the first general to plot against the Fourth Republic, later a Poujadist candidate, and now a close ally of the colonels.

The aims of the leaders differed as much as their backgrounds and temperaments. There is no reason to doubt either the assertion or the reservation in Challe's assurance to the court that there was never any intention, "as far as I was concerned," of seizing power in Paris.[1] The colonels, however, could not have achieved their aims without doing so, and had no scruples about obedience to the civil power to restrain them. Though there is some evidence that an airborne invasion was planned, it is uncertain whether they could have spared enough parachutists even if they had not been obstructed by loyalist defiance at the air-bases; they seem, however, to have depended mainly on a *putsch* by the troops stationed in France (or Germany).

THEIRS WAS AT LEAST an understandable policy. But what could Challe hope for if he did not mean to attack Paris? He claimed that in three months he could win the war and present a pacified and loyal Algeria to a startled government and a grateful country; eventually Algeria would no doubt become independent—but in conditions infinitely more favourable than the present ones. When the prosecutor asked him his reasons for believing that he could achieve in a few weeks a result that had eluded him in as many months as commander-in-chief with the full support of Paris, he had no arguments to give. His programme cannot be taken seriously: yet he was a very serious and sober man. It seems hard to avoid the conclusion that he acted on what he believed to be the imperative demands of personal honour, and then rationalised his conduct into a political programme bearing no relation to the facts of the situation. But when a man of his reputation, intelligence, and international experience declared it possible, his juniors were delighted to believe him. For it was his appeal rather than that of the extremists which attracted support in the army; his assurance that his aims were "non-political" and confined to Algeria was quoted again and again in the trials, while Argoud brought in many of his recruits on fairly innocent pretexts such as "taking part in a demonstration," avoiding any mention of a seizure of power.

Those who responded to the leaders' call, therefore, were rarely Fascists.[6] A few even shared Nicot's doubts and fears; on the very first morning Captain Carreté told a police officer he was protecting from a Fascist mob, "I shall be in jail within a week. But meanwhile I can give my men orders that will prevent bloodshed. If others replaced me they might act differently." More typical in his expectations, if outstanding in his personality, was Saint-Marc. His men were devoted to him (one lieutenant gave as his sole reason for joining the *putsch*, "I'd have been a miserable wretch to desert Saint-Marc"). As divisional press officer he had won affection and respect from the journalists, French and foreign, Left and Right. After the Resistance and Buchenwald he had served in Indo-China, seen the villagers in his area abandoned and massacred, and lost his native wife who was murdered by the Viet-minh. In Algeria, he told his judges, "I have never thought I was fighting for any kind of colonialism, which I condemn, but for a just and humane cause." It was only on the evening before the *putsch* that Challe asked him to join; Saint-Marc, once he had assured himself that it was "neither a Fascist *coup d'état* nor an action tending to racialism," agreed wholeheartedly. It was his unit which seized the main government buildings. Later, he was asked to release the fellow-*légionnaires* who had murdered the liberal lawyer Popie; he refused (however, they were freed by Godard). At the end he stood by Challe in preventing bloodshed and stopping Salan from loosing the O.A.S. on the city.

Against men like Saint-Marc, all too many of the loyalists, and especially the generals (notably

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excepting the commander-in-chief, Gambiez) cut a poor figure.[2] Gouraud, at Constantine, wavered from side to side. When a colonel phoned for instructions he was told "Be patient, we're thinking about it." When he arrived in person and asked for orders, the general replied, "What are your intentions?" "To carry out your orders," answered the colonel—but he was left to decide for himself. Another general (Autrand) told his officers, "Go if you wish, stay if you wish—I'm off to bed."

Of those who refused to join the *putsch*, few said flatly that they were loyal to the government; most merely objected (rightly) "It won't work," "You can't succeed," or "It will get you nowhere." And even among the firmest loyalists, some who had been through the internecine battles of 1941–42 could not bear to think of another. General Simon said he had three times ordered Frenchmen to fire on Frenchmen and would never do so again. Colonel Darmuzai, who had fought in Syria, thought he might be ordered to Algiers to attack the mutineers. Like Paget at the Curragh, he would not give his officers (especially those born in Algeria) a command they would feel bound to disobey. "We shall get our orders to-morrow," he told them, "and then you must make your choice." The regiment left that night to join the mutineers. "Knowing your views," wrote his second-in-command, "we all agreed not to inform you." And Gambiez himself agreed with Challe's comment that "If we took the town in an hour-and-a-half, it was because the doors were opened to us."

THOSE who made the *putsch* were a minority. But among them were very many of the best officers: the least careerist, the most capable of decision, the ones enjoying the highest respect from their colleagues and subordinates.[2] They were also the most determined, for many who did not join them were with them at heart. There was little firm support for the government's policy in the army, for the government had done little to obtain it. Like its predecessors, it had used its army for the most diverse and disagreeable tasks, engaged its officers in personal responsibilities, and then changed course without explaining the reasons to those who had to pay (or watch others paying) the price for mistakes.

> My only political action [said Captain Estoup at his trial] has been in obedience to my orders: colonialist up to 1956, paternalist in 1957–58, "fraternalist" in 1958–59, opportunist since. They never taught me at Saint-Cyr to arrange for a town's food supply, follow up a police investigation, do the job of Prefect of Police, organise a polling-station, or suspect my fellow-officers.

Ministers did not always seem to remember that, as General Beaufort said at the trials,

> We have no trade union in the army. We have to give orders which send men to die. Policy must give commanders sufficient grounds to justify such orders.

Hardly anything was done to make these grounds clear. Radical and Socialist ministers in the Fourth Republic spoke of holding out for the last quarter of an hour, or blamed their failure on the ill-will of the foreigner, or on the unpatriotic conduct of those journalists who in 1956 or 1957 still upheld the principles and policies which those same ministers had so ardently defended at the recent general election. The Fifth Republic did little better. The army was allowed to commit itself (and its protégés) to *Algérie française*, only to find the objective changed to self-determination. The shift was not explained but explained away—a mere diplomatic manœuvre to win a debate at the United Nations. Colonel Gardes was told to continue his psychological warfare activities based on the old objective. In the week of the barricades, officers who sympathised with the insurgents were officially reassured that the government's policy was still "the most French solution." In his *tournée des popotes* a few weeks later, President de Gaulle himself told them that a military victory would precede the political settlement. Within three months he was opening negotiations with the F.L.N. Then what had their fellows been killing and dying for since 1955?

"The Army's first duty is to obey the government," said a regular major (who accepted De Gaulle's policy), "but the Government's first duty is not to sacrifice the Army in useless wars for causes that are lost in advance."[3] Saint-Marc put it more bitterly: "Fifteen years of hope have turned out to be fifteen years of fraud."

SIX MONTHS LATER the President announced the advent of the Algerian Republic. "The Army no longer understands," said another pro-Gaullist regular major. "We have to adopt the attitude of mercenaries and obey whatever the orders—above all, not try to understand."[3]

"Why is the victory thrown away when we

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have won the war?" demanded Colonel de la Chapelle at his trial. "In a few months an evil force outside the army has destroyed the fruits of all the sacrifices." The president of the court questioned the imminence of victory, adding, "Besides, there are international considerations beyond your competence." "But," protested the colonel, "no one has ever mentioned them to us." When De Gaulle himself thought to please the army by telling them, "Militarily, the war is won," many officers inferred a corollary: "Now leave me to my job of losing it politically."[7]

These complaints were sincerely felt, particularly in the lower commissioned ranks. They were reinforced by less lofty but wholly natural grievances. French career officers, who were largely recruited from old military families, had lost touch with their civilian fellow-countrymen in the long years of fighting abroad; they feared that Algerian independence would deprive them of their last military province and drive them back to a decadent, hostile, and uncomprehending homeland (indeed the Foreign Legion, which has always been based on Algeria and legally may not be stationed in France, would find its very existence at stake). They resented their decline in pay and status since 1939, and wondered how many officers could be accommodated—and promoted—in the streamlined nuclear army after the last colonial war had ended. Although some officers from technical arms did join the *putsch* (Challe, Jouhaud, and Nicot were all Air Force generals), the strength of the real activists was heavily concentrated in the parachutist regiments, whose future would be doubtful in the world of push-button military organisation. So when the psychological war theorists scouted the likelihood of a nuclear conflict and claimed that subversion and revolution were the only usable and therefore the only important weapons, their critics dismissed their case as the anguished defensive cry of a school of "military Poujadists" who feared to find no place in the modernised army of to-morrow.

Within the existing army, however, the activists had much success. They were helped by their colleagues' fears for the future, resentments in the present, and frustrations at the past twenty years of unbroken and, as they felt, often undeserved defeat. While the government hesitated and equivocated, they continued to pursue their own Algerian policy despite the wishes of Paris; when it finally acted against them, they denounced the tortuous Machiavellianism with which it had misled, baffled, and cheated a simple and honest soldiery. But however genuine these feelings among officers in the field, they were partial and specious when professed by the activist staff colonels who had aimed at becoming the political opinion-makers of the army.

FOR, THE TRUTH was that in 1956–57, as one officer honestly admitted, "we had a real *gouvernement introuvable* in Paris—a ministry headed by the Socialist party leader which beat the Right on its own ground."[6] And in 1958 the army imposed a President of its own choice. Where the Fourth Republican ministers had compensated for their left-wing allegiance by patriotic bombast, De Gaulle sought national unity through masterly obscurity. But if neither ever explained frankly the limits to their freedom of action this was largely because both were so assiduously "intoxicated" with warnings that the army would revolt rather than accept a policy it disapproved. The psychological warfare specialists had put its loyalty in doubt long before it was subjected to the Machiavellian treatment in which their colleagues in the field found understandable cause for rancour. De Gaulle had to move slowly, step by ambiguous step, because he feared (probably rightly) that the alternative was a clash between the nation and its armed forces in which, whatever the outcome, democratic liberties would almost certainly succumb.

Moreover, in blaming the government for losing the war the activist officers had found a defence mechanism enabling them to overlook their own responsibility. The charge of ineffectiveness was perhaps ultimately harder to bear than that of acting like criminals. For to the latter they had ready answers. Those who were devout Catholics could get from chaplains like P. H. Simon's Father Legouey (of the type Lartéguy describes as "priests in uniform who swear like troopers and dream of holy war") the reassurance the heads of their Church denied them. Or they could persuade themselves that the critics were all perverted, masochistic intellectuals, blind to the crimes of the enemy. Why, asked Colonel Broizat, is there a committee protesting at the torture of Djamila Boupacha ("which if it happened I reprove") and silence about the four young Moslem nurses lately killed in an F.L.N. ambush? (Did he really not see that patriotic Frenchmen might

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feel responsible for deeds done in their name, and reluctant to have their army use the methods of a terrorist gang?)

But above all the activists, "ahead for the first time for centuries," knew that they knew what was at stake. "We are like doctors," said Colonel Argoud, "talking of a deadly illness and a change in his way of life to a client who, in his ignorance, doesn't believe a word of it."[6]

IT WAS HARDER TO FACE the haunting fear that the crimes and the sacrifices, the devotion and the horror had alike been futile; that psychological warfare had been waged and villages regrouped, new roads and schools built, comrades killed and suspects tortured—all for nothing. The activists had assumed that their army could move among the people like a fish in water, like Mao Tse-tung's, although the people were not their own.[8] They had talked revolution without making one. They had adopted the Viet-minh's techniques without their political driving force. They had thought words could be a substitute for deeds. The one triumph of their psychological warfare had been in consolidating their own illusions. And their harsh and arbitrary repression had lost them the people they knew they had to win. The Casbah, which had been controlled by F.L.N. terrorists, obeyed Colonel Godard after the "battle of Algiers"—willingly, Broizat maintained, because in that battle 90 per cent justice was done. In December, 1960, the F.L.N. demonstrations gave the answer to the colonels' claims. But that conclusion was intolerable. Therefore the blame must lie elsewhere—on foreign intervention, Allied betrayal, Munich-minded civilians, the "treasonous press," or the "government of scuttle."

SO THE DUTY of unconditional soldierly obedience was challenged both from Left and Right, as it had already been challenged for nearly five years—in literature by Larsan and the Centurions, in life by General Faure plotting to seize power in Algiers at the end of 1956, and by General Paris de la Bollardière publicly denouncing the repression at the beginning of 1957.

They soon had many imitators in the officer corps. But the leaders of the 1961 *putsch*, like so many of those who debated the army's crisis, were amazed to find that a man with no commission might still have a conscience. The conscripts (whom Captain Branca quaintly called "the mutineers") were eager to follow any officer who stayed loyal. But disobedience is contagious; when the commissioned ranks rebelled or hesitated, the men took matters into their own hands, so that while lieutenants were busily arresting generals with his full approval, Captain Roquefeuil was horrified to find himself arrested by privates. When the insurgent Major Robin told his subordinates "to obey traditional discipline, that is to say myself, whatever their problems of conscience," he inevitably undermined traditional discipline.

In "trampling under foot the notion of service to the State which is fundamental to an army," as Gambiez put it, the insurgents had themselves destroyed the force they wanted to save. Rather than admit it, they blamed those Communists whose influence in the army they had for years—and rightly—estimated at nil. Challe himself, the prosecutor said, "saw red everywhere."

Men of the Left were often no less self-righteous. After condemning the arbitrary régime of *pouvoir personnel* and excusing desertion and aid to the enemy, they were soon clamouring for the *tribunaux d'exception* of the detested régime to put to death the imprisoned leaders of the *putsch*—the very ones who had ensured that it was liquidated without violence. Fortunately, some at least of the "Fascists" had been less willing than the professional humanitarians of the Left to spill French blood. But they offered exactly the same defence for their actions.

"Conscience prevails against the law. The law is no excuse." Whose words? *France-Observateur*, *Témoignage Chrétien*, Larsan answering Dhagondange? No, an O.A.S. journal addressed to officers in the army in Algeria, entitled: *Les Centurions*.

[8] See Brian Crozier, "The General's Generals" (ENCOUNTER, April, 1960).

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Anthony Carson

A Trip to Amsterdam

IT WAS LIKE Galway Bay and those terrible songs. I had been conditioned, like a Pavlov dog, to feel an attack of nausea whenever I heard a shiny, malty Irish voice plugging a Galway sunset. Until I actually went there, was forced to go there, and trembled before that very sunset, something out of the corner of a forgotten fairy story, a sunset of kings, hair-hooded queens and blood, and smelt the long ghostly air of the desolate hills. It was true. And so it was with the tulips of Holland, the flower regiments which march into the parks of London and drill all day in front of the deck-chairs and the grubby poodles. I felt the same shiver of boredom, an utter inability to be reduced by these waxy lady grenadiers, until I found myself on a train from the Hook of Holland *en route* to Amsterdam.

I was drinking beer in the wagon restaurant when I suddenly saw the first flowers. They blushed over the flat land in exact geometrical patterns, a mathematician could have used them as diagrams. I had always imagined that this sort of rigidity would repel me, but I felt a lifting of the heart, all the more because of the gradation of colours, purple, lilac, violet, lavender, yellow, pink, and red. Faster and faster came the lovely parallelograms, all the earth vibrated with a Spring mathematic, and all my cares seemed to lift and dissolve. Of course it was early Spring, and the actual tulips were only budding, playing on the ground, most of the flowers were crocus and hyacinth and others which I was unable to distinguish because of the speed of the train. But the magic was here, the popular magic was not a trick.

Amsterdam station is as clean as a pin. Once outside you can see the canals and the barges and brilliant modern water-buses and a dice of seagulls thrown high over the brown water. I found a taxi and asked for Singel where I had been found a hotel. The driver was a large red-faced man with a shouting voice and he was, for ever, Amsterdam. "You a sailor?" he shouted over his shoulder as he drove over the first bridge. "No," I said. "Not a sailor?" he shouted again in English, "you look like one." "I'm not," I said, "can you guess what?" He thought for a while and then shouted, "Writer." "What made you think that?" I asked. "Sailors and writers love life," he shouted. Or can, I thought, amazed. He opened the taxi-door and carried my bag up the steps into the hotel.

It was a very old hotel. On the ground floor was a sort of café-lounge. The proprietor was an old man in spectacles who looked like Beethoven with a tall, thin son who seemed to do all the housework. The rooms upstairs were reached by a circular kind of narrow gangway which made me feel I was on a schooner, and at the very top was my room. It overlooked a canal, was spotlessly clean, and you could hear the seagulls sobbing of the sea in the early morning. There was also a hot shower with a heater, and the price, with a large Dutch breakfast, was eight shillings a day. A perfect headquarters.

THE FIRST FRIEND I made in Amsterdam was a crook. He was sunning himself outside a small café in a street near the station. We exchanged cigarettes, and I told him I was a writer. "You are writing a book about Amsterdam?" he said. "Not quite yet," I said. "You need the experience," he said, raking me with his sun-glasses. "That's it," I said. "Buildings," he suggested. "There are some fine buildings in Amsterdam." "I'm sure," I said quickly, "but it's not quite buildings." As a matter of fact, I have to be lured to buildings, trapped in buildings, they

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have to form a part of a very intimate geography, where objects suddenly integrate with living experience. This may not be very good, but it is so. The sun-glasses of my new friend loomed closer. "Girls," he said. "You mean girls." "Perhaps girls," I said, not wishing to appear one of those eternal frustrated rubbernecks who flood the European cities. After all, I had two girls on the English island, or had I still? Amsterdam had suddenly cut me off. "Then we'll go down the street," he said, rising. "It's round the corner."

The street was a long street, something like Soho, but cleaner and brighter and more coloured, crammed with cafés, cinemas, shops, and cabarets. "You can tell which places are which," said my friend, "by looking at the lights in the windows. One set of lights is for temperance—coffee and Seven-Ups—another set for beer, a third for spirits and wine, and when you get all the lights together you know what to expect. "Certainly," I said. The first bar we entered was full of coloured men from Surinam. There was a juke box and stereo and a song was booming out, *"Give my love to Mary, but don't tell her where I am."* In Peru, in Golders Green, in the jungles of New Guinea, perhaps in Moscow the same conformist hymn was blaring out in the sad, gay bars. A thin negro in huge sun-glasses was rattling the marimba, writhing in a sort of graceful fit, two paces forward, three paces backward. Nearly all the coloured men wore sun-glasses, were well-dressed, relaxed, and multilingual. There was a small complement of young white girls, one with studious spectacles, wearing their hair in the high-splendoured dome of the Queen of Persia, prevalent now everywhere, but somehow specialised to the sea-air of Amsterdam.

We visited further bars, examining the lights, and began drinking faster. "Now then," cried my friend, "buy the girls a drink." He gave me a wink, the special pimp's wink for the starving tourist, the businessman banned from the double bed, the dreaming dog with money for a bone. All the girls in the bar looked fairly plain, with the sort of plainness which had been pushed to the extreme limit. But further on, near the eternal stereo juke box, was a girl with high Persian hair who seemed elegant and charming. "I'll buy her a drink," I said to my new friend. "Go and speak to her," he said, taking off his sun-glasses. "You speak to her," I said. "Are you afraid of the girls?" he asked. "I've only just arrived in Amsterdam," I said. "It's like someone trying out a new piano." We walked over to this particular girl and my friend whispered in her ear. She turned and smiled at me. I am notoriously short-sighted and even the middle distance is fantasy and the unknown, something which has saved me from much disillusion, but also blinded many adventures. The girl was actually hideous, in a positive sort of way. "Have a drink," I said in a throttled voice. "Thank you," she said. "And her mother and sister," cried my friend, replacing his sun-glasses. "And the lady of the bar and her mother-in-law." At that moment a flower-seller entered the bar, her arms bulging with tulips, and edged round behind me. "And tulips," whispered my friend. "Tulips for the ladies. It is an old Amsterdam custom." Suddenly I felt furious, I felt like an ageing American businessman randy between conferences, the lady was not for lusting, the tulips bowed like commissionaires. "No," I cried. "No." "But..." said my friend. "Listen," I said, "I've got to explain. I am terribly short-sighted. When I got near this lady she didn't look like what she appeared at a distance. She looked the complete opposite." "But one has to love all the ladies," said my friend in a truly surprised voice, "absolutely all of them. You have to show you love them and give them all tulips." "That is almost absolutely true," I agreed, "and I am ready to shake your hand for the sentiment." And, in fact, I shook his hand, although I was perfectly well aware that he was getting rake-offs from the bars and the tulip-sellers. I then gave the broken image a drink but not her fake mother and went home to bed.

THE next morning I shambled down the gangway from my bedroom and had breakfast in the coffee room. While I was eating a huge sort of fruit bun, a man approached my table and bent over, inspecting me. I felt something was about to happen, not physically, not dramatically, but something to me as a life-collector. Luckily, since this is my profession, way of life, ticket of entry, it generally always occurs wherever I go, fresh, new, and innocent. Thus butterfly-collectors are soon surrounded by all sorts of rare species, and true seducers attract women with their own sort of private honey. "You are English," said the tall figure. "How did you know?" I asked. "Because you are reading the *Daily Mirror* and *Tit-Bits*," he said. He sat down and began talking. He was English, had lived in Amsterdam eleven years,

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spoke perfect Dutch, and was a mixture of things, crime reporter, theatre critic, tulip expert, racing driver, and something else mysterious, brutal and shy at the same time. "I'm a sort of journalist, too," I said, "though I don't go to events, except accidentally. I write mostly about myself, a mixture of conceit and laziness or something like that." "Highbrow, eh?" said the tall man with a smile, but it wasn't the usual reporter's smile at the poor artist, all suburbs and ice-bandage headlines.

His name was Hicks. After I had finished my breakfast, we went for a walk around the old town, linked by its necklace of water, to the market. I felt a flutter of excitement in my nerves, the heavy hooded buildings stooped over the water, not with elegance, but with a sort of mellow wisdom, they had really made life stand still. At the corner of bridges there were kiosks selling sliced fresh herring mixed with chopped onion which you ate with a toothpick right off the washed white counter. A red pennant hung outside a bookshop. "It's National Book Week," said Hicks. "A real event in Holland. A selected publisher presents a book written by one of a certain number of authors. It is published without the author's name, only the publisher knows who it is, and the public have to guess. Writers don't earn much money, but the public take it seriously. National Book Week is an event here, much more important than a society wedding in England, crooks and heiresses, dog-shows or a rift in the T.U.C."

As we approached the market we crossed another canal and down a street with rooms like shops with plate-glass windows. In them sat women, close to the window, legs up, knitting or reading. "Business women," said Hicks, "you never say whores here." In fact one would hardly have imagined the word, most of them seemed relaxed, neat, and respectable, occasionally viewing the street with modest eyes, and then dropping their eyes down again to their jumper or National Book. "It was better in the old days," said Hicks. "They sat in their lingerie, and it used to make quite a pleasant walk." As we approached the market he talked about various aspects of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam he had penetrated in the course of his work. It was something of a police and official-run state, a sort of republic topped by the crest of a monarchy. There was a solid, entrenched, yet ceremonious bourgeoisie in the heart of the city. He had often drunk beer with Prince Bernard, walked casually in and out of the palace, could call some of the Royal Family by their Christian names. Very easy-going. But nothing to do with the burghers, the Mayor, the Town Hall officials who held almost mystic banquets and prolonged ultra-plebeian conferences wearing embroidered shirts and lace cuffs. "Amsterdam seems tolerant enough," said Hicks. "But it creaks with formalities inside. Take the ladies. The young girls all have duennas and it is the devil of a business to get one to yourself for a minute. You're always having to take tulips. Tulips to the mother, tulips to the duenna, tulips to the girl. Everybody moves about in Amsterdam with tulips, tulips with gratitude, tulips with guilt, tulips with caution. I don't know whether the tulip industry is geared to this pre-occupation, or if it is the other way round."

We entered the market, which was really quite large. Most of the space was filled with old clothes, coats, caps, and hats marked "Brand New," and there were piles of objects isolated and detached from various kinds of machines. There were fruit stalls and fish kiosks, and people were peering at the objects and walking around them almost sadly. We left the market and wandered about different parts of Amsterdam. The city is dominated by automats, you need never enter a restaurant night or day, the machines are installed outside food emporiums, and when one is not functioning you get on a train and go somewhere else. People stand by the automats eating a four-course meal out of cardboard trays, or a three-course meal, or a sausage, all hot. We went into a sort of tavern and drank beer. Hicks started to tell me stories.

"There was this remarkable man called Bergman," he said. "He was one of the best-known and best-loved figures in Amsterdam. Very distinguished, elegantly dressed, and a patron of the arts. He never gave anyone a tip less than a pound, and he used to send tramps and people down on their luck abroad, say to Vienna or Naples or Paris, first-class, best hotels, just to buy a record or a picture or a piece of jewellery. He was never known to refuse anybody money. On one occasion he stopped his taxi to listen to an old man playing the violin in the street. He called the old man into his taxi, drove him to his own house, and not only gave him a Stradivarius, but set him up in an orchestra. When Bergman was arrested and

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sent to prison for ten years, there was an outcry in Amsterdam, all his pensioners walked the streets with placards, all their lives and hopes had depended on this man, now they were back to the windy corners and the automats." "Why arrested?" I asked. "Misappropriation of funds," said Hicks. "He had sedulously, through the years, stolen some hundred thousand pounds from his employers. It took me a lot of time and energy to be able to visit him in prison. He was extremely happy and asked to be remembered to all his protégés."

We had some more beer. "After all this time, of course, I can generally get around wherever I want. With my Press card I can use police cars and, if I'm really in a hurry, jump on a fire engine. They're very good to accredited journalists in Amsterdam." His mouth tightened, the tenderness faded, the brutality came out liked a naked sun. "Then there was this chap Hendriks," he went on. "You get a fair amount of their type here. A certain amount of violence, there's an undercurrent, you can feel it under the surface. Hendriks was, or is, one of the real gangsters. He had an argument with a man in a bar, some sort of clerk, and hit him over the head with a bottle. Full bottle of Geneva it was. Not only did he crack this man's skull but it had to be trepanned, grisly business, he was in hospital two years. Hendriks was in prison three years, he's only just been let out. Months before his release all his friends started the preparations for the big dinner, one of the biggest dinners given in the district, you never saw or tasted anything like it." "How do you know?" I asked. "I was invited," said Hicks. "All the accredited journalists were invited. I got there on a fire engine, straight through the lights. I was there early as a matter of fact. It's out in the country not far from Amsterdam, and one of Hendricks' subordinates met me in his car."

We ordered some more beer. "This fellow had bought the pig for the dinner," said Hicks. "It was a fine pig, I've never seen a pig like it, it would have fed a platoon. It was tied to a rope behind the car, and when the car started up the pig had to run. It had to run all the way until it burst its blood vessels and then it was dragged home. They do that so that the blood seeps through the body, it makes it succulent." "I see," I said. "Even the police couldn't stop it, there was one on the corner but he just waved us on. And there was nothing I could do. We all hung around for a bit in the house, drinking, there were enough bottles to last for weeks, and then eventually the pig came in. It was laced with anchovies and its mouth was watering with oranges and it was buttressed with clams and heaven knows what. I can't remember the rest."

IN THE EVENING, late, I returned to the all-black café. It was called *The Cyclops*. The marimbas were weaving like crickets, and there was the usual flurry of Dutch, Surinam, American, and Spanish. I noticed a young Dutchman sitting at the counter talking to a coloured man who made me think of the early gods, in grove and temple, turned black by desert suns. He was a rarity because his eyes, unlike the eyes of almost any negro, were directed inwards to some sort of dream, and the Dutchman appeared to be plucking him out, by word and gesture, from a quicksand. I approached the Dutchman and made some remark. He answered in English and we were soon in the middle of a conversation. He introduced me to his friend whose name was Sno, and for quite a time I believed it was one of those kinds of joke names, like "Shorty" for a tall man, but it turned out that, in reality, his name *was* Sno. Five minutes later the conversation exploded into an argument. It was about Africa. In fact, unlike a good, seasoned traveller, I had had the bad taste to introduce the subject, right here in the stronghold, and Sno jumped right out of his dream and began shouting. Other coloured men came up smiling, and then their smiles were switched off and their voices lifted. For some reason I was the man with the whip and the Saracen and the pass-books. "Do you know," cried one man with eyes of crafty injustice, "I work on a certain ship and I get to Genoa." "I know Genoa," I said placatingly. "To hell with that," cried the negro. "There is this first mate, he is an Englishman from Africa. Do you know what he do? He say you dirty black bastard and he jump with his boots on my feet. Then in Genoa he say, 'You dirty black bastard, you not come back to my ship.' He leave me in Genoa without any pay." "Some Colonials are bastards, anyway," I said. "This man is an Englishman," cried the negro. "Colonials are not English," I said. "You don't believe me?" shouted the negro, "I will show you my feet." He took off his shoes and then his socks and extended his feet which were covered with bandages. "I always have to wear these bandages," he shouted

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high above the marimbas. "I'm sorry," I said. "That's what you say," he cried.

Sno, the Dutchman, and I went to a series of other bars, from one combination of lights to another and the argument shot up like a waterspout. I was not an African, I said, I lived all over the world. I was a writer, I liked the marimbas, there was a coloured girl in Paris called Moumoune, there were black writers in London, I was not a businessman, I accepted. "Listen," cried Sno, "I tell you what. The English are very clever." "I am not a clever Englishman," I said. "All Englishmen are clever," said Sno. "They are very good at testing the wind, they are like those weather machines, how do you call them?" "Barometers," I said. "That's right, barometers," said Sno. "They now know that the blacks will win and they make fine speeches and put on smooth faces." "I am not one of those," I shouted. "I am just a man in Amsterdam." "Here in Holland we blacks are like the whites." "The argument isn't for me," I cried, "I wish to go to Africa, right into Africa, but I can't go because I would be killed. I would be killed because of a lot of thick-necked fools." "What happens, happens," said the Dutchman. The argument suddenly subsided, much to the regret of a few bystanders. Sno was a boxer, and some of them knew it, and although the people of Amsterdam prefer the English to the Germans or the Americans, they don't really like their frozen faces. "It's good to have a nice talk," said Sno, smiled down at the table, and settled back into his dream.

LATER I visited a sort of dance-hall night-club with the Dutchman. There was a huge circular counter around which stood sprinklings of Amsterdam society, spivs, tourists, and a few "business" women. Some of the business women were elegantly dressed, and you could only tell them from the society girls because of that unmistakable air of lightness. One of them detached herself from the far end of the counter and came smilingly over to me. She was elegant and charming and her mouth had a delightful teasing sort of expression. Her name was Marie and she was about twenty-one or two. She could by manner, coquetry, and modesty, have triumphed over almost any batch of London gossip-column society girls, the sort of liverish maidens sitting on the stairs of country houses wondering what to do with their balloons. I intensely dislike things like Wolfenden reports, they distort the true incidents of living as much as the scabrous reports in the Sunday papers, both attempt to convince the timid, frustrated, and victimised reader that dangerous living cannot be beautiful, that it is some sort of crime to be socially lost, that it is safer in the vicarious back garden of life, hounded by poisoned print, perjured priests, and pompous politicians. Marie, subtly, lured me out on the pavement outside the night-club. She had only asked me for a glass of beer, and now, here was a sort of jungle where I did not know the rules. She was surrounded by men, mostly young, and there was a lot of whispering and each time she gave backward glances to me, I knew it was something special, something to do with curiosity, a sort of rubric not at all chance and money. A few minutes later a man in a large hat, who appeared to be a Canadian, walked over to her and started shouting. I couldn't hear exactly what he said, it was horribly off-key, and immediately there was a whirl of movement and the Canadian was being beaten up, fairly scientifically. Then somebody called a taxi, he was thrown into it, and they gave the name of a hospital. Two minutes later the police arrived, very tall men in leather leggings, they were both reassuring and frightening, I didn't know the rules of the war. The girl still kept looking back and I went over to talk to her, and then we started walking. I didn't know where we were going until we reached an automat and then the night closed on isolation.

I MET THE DUTCHMAN next day. We went drinking by the canals. His name was Starik. He spent most of his time studying astrology and believed in an attitude of passive resistance towards life, not lifting a finger towards the impending, whether good or bad. He had certain other beliefs, such as the extraordinary virtue of honey, and he told me about a certain honey store in Amsterdam which provided, not merely so-called honey, but honey which was guaranteed to be made from flowers and not from sugar-fed bees—such being the normal custom. "Take any disease," he said, while we watched the boats on the canals, "any disease at all. This store will find you the requisite kind of honey. I note, for instance, that you have a cough. They will provide you with a cough honey. Ring them up—I will give you the number—and they will send a dozen bottles around to your hotel." "Thank you," I said. Later on it transpired that he was a sort of

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commissionaire in a cinema in my street of adventure. I went to see him and he was dressed in a quite magnificent uniform, vaguely naval, and I watched him receiving tips from every single person who bought a ticket. In this way he earned quite a lot of money, and later on as I got to know him, he lent me money, and confided in me. I felt, and feel him, to be a great friend, I will never forget the tug of Amsterdam, the sly, biting feeling of an early Paris, a new Paris of warm blood where lovers of women, such as myself, can still love men, water, flowers, and the gull-hung sky, without any need for apology and disguise, without the terrible reports of sexless committees and the shouts of hairy rugger-players in the Sunday local.

Through Starik I met a group of other Dutchmen and coloured people. There was Teresa, an elegant "business" girl who was married to a sophisticated bearded negro who wore a homburg hat, a waiter, a young chef whose pretty wife worked in the cinema, with Starik, a strange young sarcastic barman who informed me that he had written thirty-three unpublished books and had shared a room with Truman Capote in Capri, and Rosa, a quite beautiful girl from Surinam. Rosa, like Sno, had come under the influence of Starik's astrology and honey, so much so that she seemed to be falling into Sno's same well of dreams, and would stare ahead of her in a sort of exquisite trance. "She is at the parting of the ways," explained Starik, "she used to be a 'business' girl until I worked on her and drew her up to a higher level of consciousness, but now she is, I fear, slipping back. It is not the immorality of the situation I deplore, as you know, it is the coarsening of the life sensibility."

ONE NIGHT WE WENT to a party given by Teresa the "business" woman. There was dancing and plenty of wine, about half the guests were coloured people from Surinam with a sprinkling of very charming German girls. "This is a real business girl's flat," said the chef proudly, as though he were showing me a city monument or a Rembrandt. "Just watch and listen and keep your mouth shut." "I'll try," I said, though I doubted it. I am the quiet fairly integrated writer at the beginning of a party anywhere, but at some time in the evening I throw myself into the play and dislocate it. I had been drinking a fair amount before, and I was aware, in a hazy, psychic sort of way that there was a link between me and the chef's pretty wife, who had also been drinking quite a bit. I could, in a sense, count on her as I could count on Starik or Sno or, for that matter, the chef himself who had told me to watch and listen and keep my mouth shut. Out of courtesy, nearly everybody was speaking English, but occasionally they lapsed back into Dutch. Old women speaking Dutch create a particular sort of ugliness, it weighs on your spirit, but young girls give it a lyrical, comical turn which has no equal in any other language, and as the evening wore on I found myself laughing idiotically at this sort of beauty. But every time I started to talk or perform the chef tapped me on the shoulder. "Keep your mouth shut and watch," he said, "later I will arrange the business girl for you."

About an hour later he pushed me towards the business girl. "Here he is," cried the chef. "You've got wonderful legs," I said to the business girl. "You can kiss my——," said the business girl. "I told you to keep quiet," said the chef. I kept quiet and began kissing the chef's wife, there was a great feeling of friendship there. Some of us were getting very drunk and in the end I had to walk miles home through a mirage of automats, water, and cats.

THE NEXT DAY I found another place to drink. It was very small and smart, gleaming with old prints and polished wood. The outside of the building sagged with age, august as a Rembrandt sketch, and inside were fat rosy businessmen and distinguished lovers from the rich quarter, whispering over liqueurs. I was speaking to the barman in English, when I noticed a plump, well-dressed man scrutinising me from the other end of the counter. He was about my age and had the air of huge menus, good wines and capitals. "You are English?" he asked, in that sort of amber accent which could only mean Oxford. "Yes," I said. "I'd have thought Spanish. Or a touch of Mongol." "Thanks," I said. "You are on a visit?" "In a sense," I said. I explained my profession and general purpose. "And you," I asked. "I am the British Consul," he said, "welcome to Amsterdam. I hope we see a lot of each other." "Thank you," I said. "I hope I can call on you." "Not officially," cried the Consul, holding up a neat white hand. "Not writers. By all means I will have you registered, and I will be delighted to meet you *ex camera*, as it were, and I will even introduce you to my fiancée,

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who is a Dutch girl, thank the Lord." He explained about the English residents, all businessmen, and the dartboard kept in this very bar, hidden under a photograph of Queen Juliana. "A thick-set business," said the Consul rather faintly, and seemed to be under the grip of a quiet strong emotion. "To tell you the truth," he said eventually, "I write poetry." His expression was now more complicated, he was one of those consuls who has always wanted to write poetry, I was a sort of poet who had often wanted to be a consul. "I'd awfully like to show some of it to you." He unzipped his case and handed me some sheafs of papers. There were about six poems, and one of them was about his Dutch fiancée, Amsterdam at night, being lost, the poem almost of an old and polished child. "They are very good," I said. "I hope to see you again," he said, reassembling his early face, and shaking hands.

THE NEXT NIGHT Starik and the chef invited me to a party. It was held in the chef's house and began at about nine o'clock. The flat was smooth and modern and furnished with a kind of subdued, sophisticated gaiety. One of the rooms was stacked with bottles of liqueur and beer, and I had not imagined this air of the Hollywood film. All my former friends turned up, and after an hour or two we began drinking, with intervals for coffee and Dutch baked meats. Dawn suddenly lurched at the windows with a huge, almost menacing orchestra of pigeons and I remember shouting out about the dawn and the birds, because nobody noticed them, not even the girls. I was very drunk, and I think I was crying. "Your land is flat, hopelessly flat," I cried. "You have no souls."

I staggered to the telephone, searched for a number in the book, and started to ring up the Consul.

Tomorrow

Too long now in this long dead way
Have I creaked by a deep dead sky
And year's youth made my faces at the May:
The fruit in the orchard is now half ripe,
The alcove slowly closing
On my mother's grieving love.
O Love, that makes the prisoner smile
And murder walk like a festival,
In my sheets sleep tonight.
Tomorrow I will go out, go away,
Sail into another day.
Whatever love does not do, I shall never say.

Geoffrey Thurley

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Plato Among Friends and Enemies

By Hans Meyerhoff

IF THERE is such a thing as the heritage of Western culture, Platonism is an integral part of it. Preserved in the Academy whose founding A. E. Taylor called "the most memorable event in the history of Western European science" and whose lifetime extended, almost a thousand years, into the sixth century of the Christian era, Plato's philosophical works have come down to us in relatively good textual condition and his philosophical ideas have continuously acted as agents of ferment in the intellectual life of the West.

Platonism entered the stream of Christian thought and theology through the writings of the Church Fathers, especially the works of St. Augustine. To him as well as to later Schoolmen, Plato was one of the few pagan thinkers believed to have been divinely inspired. (The exalted title "Divine Plato" may still be found in contemporary literature.) Platonism continued as a live issue throughout the Middle Ages in the famous controversy over the status of universals. Platonism was the philosophical godfather of modern science in the Renaissance. The revival of the Platonic Academy in Florence, under Marsilio Finico, contributed to the lasting revival of the classical, humanistic tradition in the modern world. The idea of the modern Academy itself, as an intellectual centre for the study of the sciences and liberal arts, is a Platonic heritage. Platonism has found its way into the literature and culture of all Western nations. Paul Shorey, the eminent American scholar, sketched the outlines of this story in a series of lectures called *Platonism, Ancient and Modern*; but the complete history of this all-pervasive cultural influence still remains to be written. For a contemporary thinker like Whitehead, it was "the safest general characterisation of the European philosophical tradition" to say that "it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato."

This puts a high price on the name of Plato; perhaps too high a price. At any rate, it is this price which is at stake in a controversy which has reached its climax in recent years. From numerous quarters an attack has opened upon Plato designed to show that behind the traditional mask of a culture hero lurks a deceptive and dangerous ideological villain. The target of this attack is Plato's social, political, and moral philosophy—best known, even to the non-academic reading public through the *Republic*, a work into which Plato poured the substance of his philosophy. Borrowing a term familiar from recent literary criticism, I shall refer to the various forces behind this attack by the collective name of "the new criticism" of Plato.

THE new criticism has been mounting during the last hundred years. It derives from different sources:

(1) A relatively mild variety was the criticism of Plato from the perspective of 19th-century liberalism. One of its first products was the work of the English political historian George Grote, *Plato and the Other Companions of Socrates* (1865); the philosophical historians, Theodor Gomperz and Eduard Zeller, later followed Grote's lead on the continent.

(2) Much more radical was the Marxist criticism according to which Plato's "ideal" state was the typical product of class rule in a slave society. This Marxist line may still be found in contemporary works such as A. D. Winspear's *The Genesis of Plato's Thought* (1940) or B. Farrington's *Greek Science* (1944). Both Grote's liberalism and Marxist criticism contributed to the influential work by R. H. S. Crossman, *Plato Today*.*

(3) Quite different was Nietzsche's criticism at the end of the last century. Nietzsche—a

* First published in 1937, and recently re-issued by Allen & Unwin with a new preface.

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classical scholar before he became a philosopher—attacked Socrates as the destroyer of the creative, Dionysian component of Greek culture. He also exposed Platonism in general (along with Christianity) as the most conspicuous symbols in the ancient world of an enfeebled idealism and a repressive, guilt-ridden morality.

(4) Echoes of Nietzsche's critique reverberate in the psychoanalytic approach to Plato. On the one hand, psychoanalysis is favourably disposed towards Plato, because Freud's topology of the mind, its three layers, together with such basic concepts as *Eros* and *Ananke*, reflect the Platonic heritage; on the other hand, psychoanalytic studies have also concentrated on exposing neurotic and repressive elements in Plato's life and thought. The political theorist Hans Kelsen used psychoanalysis as a key to Plato in a monograph called *Platonic Love* (1942).

Liberal, Marxist, and psychoanalytic sources combine in the most massive assault launched against Plato in the first volume of *The Open Society and Its Enemies* (1945) by Karl Popper; but the new criticism of Plato—a remarkable manifestation of the *Zeitgeist*—has found powerful allies in other fields. Thus Toynbee greatly strengthened its forces through his critical treatment of Plato in *A Study of History*. George Sarton incorporated the new criticism in the first volume of his comprehensive but unfinished *History of Science* (1952). Literature and the arts—in addition to history and political theory—have also adopted this new and highly critical way of looking upon Plato. Not so long ago, the American playwright Maxwell Anderson produced an extreme version of it in the New York *Times* when he compared Plato's philosopher-kings to the "dictatorships of thugs which exists in Russia to-day" and accused them of using "murder, torture, and official lying without scruple to keep the population in line." But even the allegedly dispassionate academic discourse is not above this kind of language. Although Mr. Popper complains that Plato "uses invective" as a "cloak to cover the intellectual nakedness of his arguments, or rather the total absence of any rational thought whatsoever," the modern critic, presumably for weightier reasons and on behalf of a worthier cause, does not hesitate to use language which the ordinary reader might not exactly praise as a model of scientific temperament and detachment. Plato is described as a "totalitarian party politician" who wrote "brilliant pieces of political propaganda," or whose "poisonous writings" represent a "fantastic philosophical doctrine," an insidious "theory of inquisition," and "the great betrayal" of the humanistic tradition in Western culture.

This is perhaps the most radical version of the transformation of Plato from an intellectual genius into an ideological villain. It is time, therefore, to turn to the substance of this many-sided, concerted attack. The numerous charges which the new criticism has raised against Plato roughly fall into two categories:

(1) Plato was an enemy of democracy; and the portrait he painted of the democratic state is, at best, a satirical caricature and, at worst, a wilful, deliberate distortion for the purpose of promoting his own political ambitions and the interests of the oligarchic, pro-Spartan party in Athens. (2) The ideas and values which Plato incorporated in his own "ideal" state are totalitarian, reactionary, and repressive. They defeat, rather than further, the goal of a good society and the attainment of human happiness.

THE first charge hardly comes as a surprise. Plato did not conceal his hostility towards the democratic state as he knew it in Athens in the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. Moreover, his portrait of Athenian democracy is obviously a dramatic caricature. But this is so familiar that it would hardly justify the elaborate apparatus of a new and presumably higher criticism. Unfortunately, the new criticism neglects to deal "critically" with several points which are extremely important for an understanding of Plato's hostility towards democracy.

First, Plato's criticism is more than a literary product. It combines satire with serious arguments which Plato, rightly or wrongly, considered relevant to his negative judgment. Democracy had been "bad" for Athens, he thought, because it had sentenced Socrates to death for subversive activities against the state, and because it had led to the downfall of the city. Themistocles built a great wall; Pericles, a great empire; but how good, Plato asked, was this policy, *in the long run* for the welfare of the people. There were other, more general, objections as well. Democracy was bad, according to Plato, because it employed bad methods for recruiting its ruling class; again, because it relied upon the chance interplay of social forces, not upon intelligent planning, in deciding public policy, or, at worst, because public policy was at the mercy of fluctuating electoral majorities swayed by irrational and propagandistic appeals; and, finally, because it generally paved the way for tyranny, including political purges and military aggression—the worst form of government and the most miserable way of life in Plato's estimate. Now these arguments may or may not be valid; but it is unfortunate that the new criticism of Plato in defence of democracy should fail to address itself to these arguments in order to evaluate their relevance

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in the historical perspective of more than two thousand years. Keeping this perspective in mind, Plato's charges are not so very different from Mr. Walter Lippmann's diagnosis of "the malady of democratic states" in his book *The Public Philosophy*. It is one thing to accuse Plato of caricaturing Athenian democracy; it is something else to disregard the serious arguments which he thought he had in support of his position or to dispose of them in the language of contemporary political slogans.

Second, Plato used his intelligence and satire, rightly or wrongly, for a criticism of political reality in general—democracy included. If he was anti-democratic, he was also anti-oligarchic, and, most of all anti-tyrannical. In other words, Plato's *Republic* shows philosophical reasoning, or speculation, engaged, not only in the construction of a Utopia, but also in the destruction of all existing historical forms of government. Perhaps this assigns too lofty and ambitious a function to the rational faculties of man; but it suggests at least that, before (or in addition to) being a reactionary totalitarian, Plato was also a radical rational revolutionary. However much we may wish to criticise the construction of his own ideal state, we must first acknowledge the undeniable fact that, in the history of Western culture, the *Republic* repeatedly inspired "utopian visions," from Bacon to Bellamy, as a paradigm for a rational criticism of society and as a model for a better way of life. It is a conspicuous failure of the new criticism that, blinded by Plato's obvious and sharp criticism of democracy, it does not consider, or does not wish to consider, a more fundamental and embarrassing question: What is the function of a philosophy of society? I know it is customary to say that the philosopher pursuing utopian projects like Plato's suffers from metaphysical delusions of grandeur. The social philosopher should be satisfied with much more modest goals; he should spend his time in analysing words and concepts in current usage; or he should make a contribution to "piecemeal social engineering." But if the social philosopher be nothing but an expert in justifying the ordinary usage of words, however much abused they may be, if he is to be nothing but an expert in feeding a computer or for solving a technical social problem, preferably of military use, what has become of philosophy in our times? In failing to meet Plato on this level, the new criticism may ultimately be more "reactionary"—in the sense of taking the historical realities, or ordinary words and practices, for granted—than he was.

Third, while Plato was undeniably a severe critic and enemy of democracy, this does not enable us to conclude that he was personally responsible for the decline of Athenian democracy or for the crisis of the modern democratic state. Ideas are weapons; but when Plato was employing his intellectual weapons, the fate of his native city had already been settled and sealed. It is a form of historical anachronism to impute to Plato, as most recent critics have done, a major share in the responsibility for the decline of Athens. Plato did interfere in politics three times during his life (with singular lack of success), but this was in Syracuse, not in Athens. After the defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War and after the death of Socrates (i.e., after the age of thirty), Plato had nothing more to do with Athenian politics. He withdrew into the ivory tower of the Academy. And although it may be significant that the Academy was located in Athens (and not in Sparta or elsewhere), and although political and constitutional theory formed an important part of its studies, nothing Plato wrote—or the pupils of the Academy did—had any major effect upon Greek history. It must not be forgotten that, some ten years after Plato's death, Alexander was chosen supreme general of the Greeks and embarked upon the invasion of Asia as the first stage in the conquest of the ancient world.

We must guard even more carefully against falling into the trap of historical anachronisms when we construct causal lines linking Plato with the enemies of modern democracy. True, we do not find in Plato a recognition of the basic principles, say, of the French Revolution or of modern democratic constitutional government. The *Republic* does not establish the heavenly city dreamt of by 18th-century *philosophes*. It is also true that it represents a theoretical model of a good society which may be called organic and/or totalitarian. But the question is whether, as some of the new critics have charged, these truisms make Plato a partner in the Nazi or Communist enterprise of our times. Now Marxist criticism was a major factor contributing to the revision of the traditional image of Plato, and from a Marxist, or Communist, point of view, Plato is the stereotype of bourgeois or aristocratic idealism, the typical representative of a class society based on the institution of slavery. Still, not even the wildest historical imagination would seriously claim that Hitler or Himmler, Stalin or Khrushchev are incarnations of the philosopher-king. Plato's repeated and scathing critique of absolute, personal dictatorship as the worst way of life imaginable for mankind must always remain a source of embarrassment for apologists of political tyranny.

But even these pleas of defence are rather trivial as compared with a more general correction. To trace the origins of modern totalitarian-

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ism to Plato's social philosophy, one fact must not be overlooked: in the social history of the Western world, the dominant model for analysing the relationship between state and society, or between society and the individual, has always been what modern writers call an organic model. Aristotle's *Politics*, despite its criticism of Plato, reflects the same organic analogy—the state, or society, is an organism writ large—as the *Republic*. The idea of a "corporate state" is by no means the prerogative of Hegelian thinkers. It is the doctrine of Thomist social philosophy as it was the reality of political life during the Middle Ages; and it re-entered the modern world in the revival of Thomism as the official philosophy of the Catholic Church under Leo XIII. But organic, corporate thinking is by no means the prerogative of Catholic philosophy either. It is as characteristic of Calvin's Geneva as of Rousseau's conception of democracy based on the absolute supremacy of the General Will. It is still the ideal of Mr. Eliot's *Idea of a Christian Society*. Even Mr. Lippmann, a respectable democrat, employs organic concepts and analogies; e.g., the interests of the people as a "corporate body" as against the interests of mere electoral majorities.

It is too often forgotten, in the clamour of public voices, that the liberal society—or the liberal state which, according to T. D. Weldon, is constructed by analogy with a machine instead of a living organism—represents a relatively late and brief interlude in the social and political history of the Western world. To make Plato's *Republic* responsible for the fate of liberalism is to take the easiest, most un-historical way out.

But how good, after all, was the way of life which Plato himself sketched in the constructive part of his political and moral philosophy? Have we not been charmed and deceived, for two thousand years, by "the spell of Plato" and by the siren voices of a reactionary, idealistic metaphysics? These questions lead to the second and more serious set of indictments against Plato: that when we critically examine Plato's proposals for a good society, we find them defective and opposed to the social goals and moral aspirations of the liberal-humanistic and politically-progressive modern tradition.

For what do we find in the *Republic* according to the new criticism? A rigid class (or caste) society ruled by an intellectual élite; the glorification of a military class, or a military way of life; racialism and economic autarky; propaganda, censorship, and thought-control; a denial of liberty and equality; in short, a totalitarian state-society, repressive and reactionary, a return to what Mr. Popper (after Bergson) calls the tribal unity of a "closed society" against the freedom and differentiation of an "open society."

These points deserve to be taken seriously; they bring a new perspective to the traditional interpretation of Plato's thought. No doubt our recent experience with Nazi and Communist totalitarianism has made us more sensitive than previous scholars were to certain questionable aspects of Plato's social philosophy. No doubt these aspects were often overlooked, or underplayed, because the interpreter's preconceptions, or social prejudices, corresponded more or less to Plato's own views. In this respect, the new criticism serves as a valuable correction and as a stimulating point of departure.

Yet, while the *Zeitgeist* has opened our eyes and caused significant revisions in the traditional image of Plato, it is not without dangers of its own. It may impair our vision of the past and lead to distortions and mis-readings. I shall briefly consider a few examples illustrating this point:

Plato believed in eugenics; he believed that scientific breeding of human beings was *one*—but by no means the only—rational method of improving the calibre of the ruling class. (Rigid aptitude and intelligence tests were another method.) Now this belief may strike us as utopian, on genetic grounds, or as objectionable, on moral grounds; but it does not mean that he was a "racialist" in the Nazi sense. He did not believe in a superior "master race" and he did not believe in a mythology of blood and soil. Thus it is a dubious critical procedure to juggle these two concepts, eugenics and master race, in order to convey the impression that they mean the same thing; they do not.

Then, Plato devoted considerable attention to what he called "guardians," i.e., the military-executive class in society. The criteria he chose for the selection and training of this class, preparatory for his philosopher-kings, may be mistaken—though it would be worth discussing why, and why our criteria for membership in the political élite are superior; but the important point is that Plato's programme for the military-executive class, however mistaken, does not make him a "militarist" in the modern sense of the word. On the contrary, one of Plato's chief objections against the Athenian empire was that it had foolishly engaged in adventures of military expansion. He did sympathise with Spartan techniques of military training; and he did incorporate some Spartan customs of social life into the *Republic*; but it is dubious to infer from this that Plato thought the life of a soldier was the most desirable form of human existence. The philosopher-rulers are trained experts in

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music, mathematics, astronomy, and dialectical philosophy, products of an intensive life-time education, capable even of some kind of mystic vision—they are not retired army generals.

Third, Plato did take the division of society into ruled and ruling classes for granted—what political analyst has not done so? Consequently, he was primarily interested (as were Machiavelli, Pareto, or Mosca) in the problem of the selection, circulation, and stability of the political élite. But while this was his primary objective, it does not follow, as most recent critics have charged, that he completely neglected the problem of what limitations, if any, were to be imposed upon the power of the ruling class. Plato must have thought he provided several limitations: an elaborate institutional machinery for selecting and training an intellectual élite; the priority of the rule of law; the abolition of the family and private property. Again, he may have been mistaken in these provisions. The whole notion of an intellectual élite, like the philosopher-rulers, may strike us as hopelessly utopian. But what ruling class, in the history of mankind—with the possible exception of the Jesuit colony in Paraguay—has ever been satisfied with no more than the ascetic rewards Plato provided for his rulers? And whether mistaken or not, Plato did not ignore the general problem of the scope and limits of political authority.

FINALLY, we must briefly consider the worst charge brought against Plato: his own admission of deception. In a famous passage of the *Republic*, Plato proposes that the people be told a "fiction," or a "noble lie," according to which class-distinctions in society are to be explained to the mass of people by analogy with differences in metals like bronze, silver, and gold. This, he hopes, will persuade them to acquiesce in the class structure of his model society without rational proof. Now we may feel that this is an undignified suggestion coming from a philosopher; we may refuse to accept fictions as compatible with a good society; we may reject the particular kind of fiction invoked by Plato, or the purpose it serves in the *Republic*. But before we vent our moral indignation on Plato or use this passage as the sole basis for the extreme charge that he advocated "lying propaganda," we might also pause to reflect that Plato (as usual) was dealing with a fundamental problem of social theory.

After Marx, Nietzsche, Sorel, and Freud it would be naïve to deny that fictions, or myths, have played, and continue to play a crucial rôle in politics. Thus it is disingenuous, to say the least, to twist Plato's recognition of this fact into the charge that he advocated "lying propaganda"—all the more so, if the critic's own political vocabulary cannot dispense with myths in disguise. For, according to Mr. Popper, the ultimate moral values which we choose as goals for the good society are "decisions" or "conventions," which are not rationally justifiable and which invariably contain "a certain element of arbitrariness." Now, if liberty and equality are chosen as ultimate moral values, not on rational grounds, but by an ineluctably arbitrary act of will, or faith, do they not have the logical status of political myths?

The problem cuts more deeply still. According to Bentham, "the origination of governments from contract is a pure fiction, or, in other words, a falsehood." Whether Bentham was right or wrong, it would hardly occur to anybody to accuse advocates of the contract theory as defenders of lying propaganda. On the contrary, Walter Lippmann considers the fiction of a contract an indispensable prerequisite for the justification of democratic, constitutional government. But if Mr. Lippmann can argue that "a fiction is not necessarily a falsehood," but "may be a vehicle of truth," why get so excited about Plato's recognition of the need for political fictions, even though we may hope for myths of a different quality?

A PROPER defence of Plato obviously requires a more careful presentation of the charges and a more detailed sifting of all the relevant evidence. Fortunately, there is a work which satisfies these conditions. This is a book by Ronald B. Levinson entitled *In Defence of Plato* (1953).* Its length—674 pages including 16 detailed appendices—gives an idea of the scope and thoroughness with which the various problems involved in the present controversy are treated; and this treatment is a model of judicious scholarship, critical analysis, and Socratic irony.

It is impossible, therefore, within the scope of this essay, to present anything like a complete case, either pro or con, in the current controversy over Plato's historical reputation and contemporary significance. We cannot even attempt any final judgment. The tempest in the academic teapot has by no means subsided; and the issues it has stirred up raise many fine, technical points of scholarship. Thus we can only make a few concluding remarks which may perhaps help to place both the attack upon and the defence of Plato into a wider perspective.

While the final returns are not yet in, it is

* A similar more condensed version of such a defence may be found in the first part of *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law* by John Wild.

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safe to predict, I think, that the new criticism—however exaggerated and misleading—cannot be disregarded in any future evaluation of Plato's social and moral philosophy. Even Mr. Levinson's able and careful defence of Plato makes it perfectly clear that we cannot simply go back to an uncritical or even exalted estimate of Plato as a divinely inspired social prophet. For after we have discarded historical anachronisms, after we have rejected the terribly oversimplified causal view which holds Plato responsible for the decline of Athens or the crisis of democracy in the modern world, after we have clarified semantic confusions with regard to such concepts as racialism, militarism, and lying propaganda, and after we have exposed (as Mr. Levinson does brilliantly) inconsistencies and logical fallacies in the works of the new criticism—after we have raised these and other serious qualifications about the new criticism of Plato, there remains a substantial and significant contribution. The combined forces of the new criticism have focused upon aspects of Plato's social and moral philosophy that distinguish it sharply from the ideals of the liberal-democratic tradition in politics.

The chief points of difference are three-fold. First, as we have noted, Plato's ideal community is constructed by analogy with an organism. State and society are conceived as an organic unity, not, as in the liberal tradition, as separate domains of authority; individual and society are linked in an organic whole, not kept separate by "inalienable" rights. Secondly, the result of this organic conception of the state is "totalitarian" if this term be defined in a neutral sense as indicating that the state-society is endowed, at least potentially, with an unlimited power over the totality of social institutions and functions, including economics, education, art, and religion. Thirdly, the basic values behind this theoretical model are derived from the same organic analogy.

In all these respects, the *Republic* differs from the theoretical foundations of the modern liberal state and approximates to the social reality of our own times. This, I believe, is an important clue to the significance of the new criticism of Plato. It is an implicit critique of our own culture; it strikes through Plato's philosophical idealism at totalitarian realities of our own culture in order to save the myth of a liberal ideology. Thus the new Anglo-Saxon criticism, at least, is not so much an interpretation of Plato as a commentary upon our own age.

For what makes Plato a totalitarian social thinker? What makes him reject the surplus and luxury values of freedom and individualism? The answer is that his own ideas of social justice and individual happiness emerge within the organic context of the state-society. An organism, whether social or individual, is called "just" when it is ordered, regulated, and integrated; when it preserves and promotes stability, strength, peace, and harmony among the changing and conflicting diversities of social classes, human interests, and individual impulses. An organism, whether social or individual, so ordered, regulated, or integrated, Plato thought would be "happy." Again, he may have been mistaken in these beliefs: a Republic so constructed might not contain any "happy" citizens according to our concept of happiness. But this kind of reasoning helps to explain Plato's criticism of, and impatience with, what we would call inalienable rights of the individual as against the sovereign claims of the state-society. They explain his preference for authority over liberty, for hierarchy over equality, for collective over private interests. And they explain his demands for planning on a total scale, for rigid control of economics, education, and the arts, and for a repressive morality. All these measures, he believed, were indispensable means for achieving the "just" and "happy" life in society.

SURELY, it is not indulging in existential despair to suggest that the liberal state, including possibly its culture and ideology, may be a thing of the past. The controlling ideal symbols in our own culture have gradually shifted in the direction of the organic social values which underlie the *Republic*. Traditional liberal values are increasingly replaced, despite the preservation of old institutional forms, by values of a different kind. Organisation and rational efficiency, economic power and military supremacy, internal strength and stability, preservation of law and order, peace of mind and security, hierarchy (status), harmony, and integration within the organism, whether it be society or the individual—these and other "survival values" (in Paret's language) have become the dominant value symbols of our age.

To the extent to which these symbols move men's minds, they are creating a new pattern of culture. It is easy to recognise some of the essential features of this new culture in the theoretical model of the *Republic*; it is perhaps not so easy to discover in the reality of this culture an approximation to the ideal limits of human existence which Plato demanded of philosophy.

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THEATRE

Under the Combination Room

By Nigel Dennis

ALL WHO BELIEVE that the theatre is a mirror of reality should demonstrate their fidelity by looking into *The Affair*. There is no need for them to see all of it: even those that pride themselves on looking reality in the eye should not look in *The Affair*'s eye for more than two of its three acts. For neither C. P. Snow nor his adapter Ronald Miller is the sort of writer that would use the stage dishonourably to show a theatrical or exaggerated view of life; they are much too frank and straight to wave wands or make illusory gestures. So we must take it that what we see on the stage of the Strand Theatre is life as it is really lived by real professors in a real university, and there is no exaggerating the frightful shock that this realisation will give to those who were fortunate enough to escape a College education. Such will stumble out like persons that had lived in a dream world—and what reproaches they will heap on themselves for having tried to help the working class or the coloured people when, all the time, in the nearby fenland, this wicked death-in-life was mouldering unnoticed! Our Left-wing dramatists may pride themselves on bringing Whitechapel into our drawing-rooms; but now that Cambridge has been brought into our studies we must dismiss the East End as drawing-room comedy.

The Affair (in effect, if not in intention) shows where professors go when they die. When they first start teaching at Cambridge they still have childish traits of inborn decency and humanity, but as the years pass they purge themselves of these and dedicate their lives exclusively to the pursuit of status, prestige, wine, and other forms of absolute selfishness. After passing through a long middle period of sterile withdrawal and isolated bitterness, they move slowly into a senility in which callousness is now so habitual that even imbecility cannot disarm it. And yet, dead though they are throughout this terrible half-century of academic life, their capacity for strife, envy, and backbiting is so great that even the rudiments of justice can be imposed on them only by a London lawyer—a man, that is to say, who can bring to the gang-warfare of Cambridge a lifetime of ugly experience at the Old Bailey.

If Sir Charles Snow were a satirist, we should have no reason to worry about what he says. We could argue that his professors were simply types rather than persons and that by painting them in nothing but bile and yellow bitterness he had quite overlooked the kindliness and humanity that are to be found even in the best-educated of men. But it is a well-known fact that Sir Charles Snow is our foremost social chronicler and that any picture he proffers must have the criminal accuracy of a passport photograph. So we must accept his play as a true history of those who inhabit what is called "The Combination Room" of a great university—accept even the fact that these professors actually are without the little emotional and sentimental weaknesses that lend a human touch to such as "Legs" Diamond and Al Capone. A dramatist must, of course, stick always to his story-line and not drag in superfluous matter; but if throughout an evening that always seemed longer than it was there is no hint that the characters were so much as born of woman, we can only conclude that they were not. And what of their effect upon those who were? For though we care nothing, once Sir Charles Snow has finished his terrible work, what happens to these hide-bound skeletons in their leather chairs, we do leave the theatre worrying about the example they present to the young.

Worry should not lead to sentimentality, of course, and it would be wrong to let Sir Charles hurry us into believing that because all professors are dead, all undergraduates are alive. Many young people are just elderly people in a retarded stage of development; many undergraduates are ripe for "The Combination Room" even before they leave the nursery. This opens the interesting question of what maturity is, and whether age has anything to do with it. And since the argument must be pushed forward somehow or other, we would suggest that maturity is largely an enhanced sensitivity, plus

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the capacity to appreciate and embrace enjoyable things. "To recapture the enthusiasm one felt as a child"—such was Nietzsche's definition of maturity. Sir Charles is to be thanked for driving Nietzsche's lesson home.

THE BEST PLACE TO FIND this sort of maturity is among undergraduates. Living, as they must for some years, under the ice-floes of "The Combination Room," they respond much as medical students do to the marble slabs of the mortuary. Death and sterility are with them from morning to night, forever reminding them of the shortness and futility of life. This black and hopeless backdrop is, apparently, the perfect setting and inspiration of true maturity. It brings out everything that is liveliest in the student, and since each student is resolved to show his maturity to the best advantage for the two or three years that remain before he graduates, it brings out a wonderful diversity of talents, which are displayed before the world with ebullient naturalness and a most refined artistry. Much of this talent is botched, some of it is merely silly; but it is true to say that, in general, the mind of an intelligent undergraduate presents a maturity that only a handful of geniuses command after the age of twenty-five. Naturally one should not be too hard on adults: it is the very mission of everyday life to convert talent into solidity and mind into matter. All one asks is ready, cheerful acceptance of the fact that University education, however cruel and appalling it may seem to the humane observer, inspires those who must undergo it with a reckless and audacious capacity for the highest sorts of self-expression. And it is in this matter, we would say, that Sir Charles Snow has failed. He has shown us the infantile world of "The Combination Room," but shown us nothing of the maturity it engenders in those who are its victims. To see this maturity, we must go to *Beyond the Fringe*.

HERE ARE FOUR young men who have not been near "The Combination Room" for some years now but have managed, somehow, to bring its lessons to London with ungovernable hilarity. Such is the maturity of their intense, passionate brains that they can move an audience to resounding laughter within thirty seconds of raising the curtain—and perform this feat, moreover, by trifling with the national anthem, an act that would occasion silence and embarrassment if it were done by older people. Or, one must add, if it were done by less good-humoured people—for this, unquestionably, is one of the main reasons for the success of this revue. It is most mature when its humour is most pure, when the opportunity for comedy is seen, seized, and used with the spontaneous alacrity that makes so-called "undergraduate humour" the entrancing thing it is. Mr. Dudley Moore can sit down at the piano and transpose the more sombre of Schubert's flirtations with a wet death into such accurate terms of humour that the transposition seems as valid as the original: how many middle-aged men, one may ask, would have this mature grasp of the inseparable "opposites" of human life? Mr. Moore can then reverse the process and play us *Ballocks, And the Same to You* as this would have come from Brahms' hands; and to hear these marvellous little variations trotted out in a Victorian mode of solemnity, with little fragments of the careless theme always finding their sober place in a dark scheme, is to feel that humour is at its best when it is not a thing of words at all. Mr. Alan Bennett, however, deals entirely in words and emerges as a mimic of the bravest sort—that is to say, having decided to speak with the tongues of vicars or professors, he hews absolutely to their parlance, adjusting his visage utterly to theirs and giving their words such an immaculate seriousness that one can scarcely laugh for admiration: Mr. Peter Cook has this same art, braced by a deader pan and without any visible inclination to humour. As for Mr. Jonathan Miller, his maturity is so rooted in enthusiasm that his only problem is that of deciding which vent he should open to blow it through: his face alone is capable of almost more interlocking combinations than Nature, to speak strictly, actually provides. And underlying this surfeit of faces, Mr. Miller has a basic face of his own, which so resembles that of the younger W. H. Auden as to make one fear that a Spanish war must be waiting in the wings. This uncomfortable delusion is, of course, an extremely proper coincidence, for it helps one to realise that the mature spirit echoes itself repeatedly from generation to generation and is in every way as traditional as the unspeakable selfishness of "The Combination Room." Which gives rise to a minor criticism of *Beyond the Fringe*—that this enthusiasm could do with a little more pedantry, a bit more of a struggle to work each skit up to a proper conclusion, instead of leaving it up in the air. And this, in turn, raises a larger and much more important point: can so much maturity be sustained and directed in such a way that its present ripeness will not go into decay? How, in brief, can enthusiasm be deterred from suicide?

THIS QUESTION does not occur to members of the audience of *Beyond the Fringe*. But it plagues the sleep of Mr. Jonathan Miller, who lives in passionate dread of his own maturity. Mr. Miller is not content to be funny. He has high

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principles, and he intends to be ugly. Good humour is not, to him, the answer to "The Combination Room." Satire is the answer, and satire is what Mr. Miller and his colleagues intend to provide not only in their theatre revue but in their new cabaret, *"The Establishment."* Their brave decision to "draw blood" has been greeted with loud applause and half the population of London has written in to book a bucket. Only one problem remains: who should donate the blood?

It will be agreed that satire of the violent sort —the sort of satire, that is, that can accommodate and satisfy an ardour as great as Mr. Miller's—demands a really gross target. The satirist must believe passionately that every time he aims his bile at a public figure or a national disgrace these objects are vile and solid enough to merit his disgust. If he is Aristophanes, he must have the Spartans at his city's gate, the knights of the city sunk into corruption, and a jumped-up tanner sitting on the people's neck. If he is Swift, he must see babies perishing of malnutrition all round him before he can suggest that they should, instead, be kept plump, and eaten. If he is really lucky, like Juvenal, he will be handed on a plate a reigning empress who spends her nights selling herself in the public brothels:

There, flinging off her dress, the imperial whore,
Stood, with bare breasts and gilded, at the door,
And showed, Britannicus, to all who came,
The womb that bore thee, in Lysisca's name;
Allured the passers-by with many a wile,
And asked her price, and took it with a smile....

If, now, we pause to compare Messalina's behaviour with that of the first ladies of England to-day, we see what a lousy deal is being offered to Mr. Miller. The wives of our statesmen have nothing more indecent to show Britannicus than a Right-wing bent in their hats; and though passers-by are still allured by royal smiles, these are not of the sort that cause the satirist's own lips to foam. The Prime Minister may be caught playing golf at Gleneagles; but even the worst of us must be expected to relax, and a foursome is not on a par with offering divots of cake to the breadless. The hideous truth is that these people of the Establishment have arrived at such a state of everyday goodwill that they are now little more vicious than you and I. The satirist raises one paw and glares at them with intense bloodshot eyes, but nothing will induce these stout birds to earn him his dinner. He asks for gobbets; they give him a bone.

The satirist has the following alternatives in this viceless situation. He can satirise the prevailing propriety and decency—what Mr. Miller calls "the neo-Gothic stronghold of Victorian good taste"—and run the risk of seeing his jokes fall flabby for want of viler inspiration. He can insist that the vice is there and whip himself into a frenzy over it; but if he cannot prove his point he will become a pitiable satirical object himself—a man who will invent vice rather than go without it. Finally, he can content himself with being chiefly a humorist and save his teeth and gall for the occasional incidents that really deserve them. These are few and far between—precious jewels that deserve the most scrupulous attention. Capital punishment, for example, is still with us—and still calls for a satire great enough to match its abominableness. Mr. Miller seizes upon it in *Beyond the Fringe* and tries to kill it with a show of gloom and a few sarcasms. In fact, this subject deserves hours of patient, calculated, ingenious savagery.

But the worst chink in Mr. Miller's maturity is his fear of being appreciated. He finds it "slightly disturbing" that the *Observer* should support him on the Left hand, while, on the Right hand, "each night... sleek Bentleys evacuate a glittering load in the foyer." Thus, where Juvenal could fear decapitation for his indignation, Mr. Miller must fear loving pats on the back for his and must spend the long nights wondering how he can attain to the dignity of being hated. A more satirical condition than his cannot be imagined and it is hard to excuse a society that drives a tough man to despair with repeated cheques and sincere pleasure. Moreover, one fears that if this state of affairs continues, Mr. Miller may have to stop it by stopping his revue.

To prevent this, we urge him to come to terms with one or two simple laws. The first is that the satirist has no way of forcing his world to accommodate itself to his needs; if it is going through a relatively decent spell, it will not excite itself into viciousness simply in order to justify an artistic method. The second law is that in times of general prosperity, Bentleys cannot be used as a satirical means-test or yardstick of human nastiness: though much larger than a Hillman Minx their evil is not proportionately greater, and their arrival at his foyer need not move the satirist to bitterness and indignation. The third law is simply that pure wit and humour are not juvenile forms of art; and it is a grave mistake to think that satire contains a maturity that is absent in them, or that pure humour is an insufficient guide to morality. We have seen *The Affair*. We have seen *Beyond the Fringe*. Laughter alone is enough to tell us which of them is the better and the more mature.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Germany & the West

MY OWN background is German and international, and my community of interests is roughly the same as Sebastian Haffner's: in other words, the fate of the German nation and the fate of Europe and America are all close to my heart. But as an old admirer of Mr. Haffner's political acumen, I cannot concur with his views on the present crisis and should like to explain why.

NATO is older than West Germany's affiliation with it, and the presence of West Germany has not substantially altered its character. This remains defensive: to defend the 1949 frontiers of the European "free world," not to reclaim former ones. While there may, during the early years of the Eisenhower administration, have been talk of effecting such a reclamation in terms of "liberating" or "rolling back" the Communist domain, no risks were ever run nor measures taken even when the situation cried out for action, as in 1953 (Berlin) and 1956 (Budapest). *Containment* was the real objective of Western policy, not liberation.

On German reunification and on the recovery of Germany's "1937 frontiers," the attitude of both the Allies and West Germany was obscure and inconsistent.

West Germany was able to be a loyal and approximately equal partner in a West European system. A united Germany would be stronger than her fellow-members and would, moreover, probably adopt a less complacent and more revisionist attitude towards the East than the present Federal Republic. France, I think, did more to frustrate the emergence of an all-German administration in 1945–56 than the Soviet Union. De Gaulle's feelings towards Germany may have changed since then, but they changed only because it was the Federal Republic with which he had to deal, not Germany-as-a-whole. In the light of this fact, the irrational nature of his policy towards the Berlin crisis becomes evident. It is more rigid than that of Britain or the U.S., yet he cannot seriously want the thing which West Berlin should symbolise, namely the unity of a greater Germany. This contradiction was less evident in the British attitude and least pronounced in that of the Americans. The latter, who were never interested in a European "balance" even in happier days, would be only too pleased to see the frontiers of the Free World pushed back to the Oder and Neisse lines provided that this could be achieved without undue sacrifice. Further than that no American politicians have been willing to go (or not at any rate in an election year, when the votes of Polish Americans carry more weight than historic German rights).

The Federal Republic was compelled to regard reunification as a motive (albeit long-term) for its affiliation with the Atlantic Pact, or at least to label it vigorously as such. It is uncertain whether Dr. Adenauer genuinely believed in this as an end or a means to an end. At all events, it must soon have become clear that this was not the way to achieve it. Once the possibility of neutralising Germany as a whole had been deliberately cast to the winds, the sole prospect of reunification lay in a "policy of strength" which could force the opposing side into concessions contrary to its vital interests. This policy of offensive strength was alien to the objects of the Atlantic Pact from the outset and was never seriously tried; and the longer it remained untried the less likely it was to be used. Reunification was patently more remote in 1953 than 1949 and more remote in 1957 than 1953—yet in both years the German electorate confirmed Dr. Adenauer in office.

THAT IS WHY I, as a German, have no present inclination to cry "treachery." We must know what we are doing. The Bonn politicians have worn the words *Deutsches Reich* and *Hauptstadt Berlin* like a Sunday suit, but their weekday attire has been "Federal Republic" and "Western Europe." The combination is an incongruous one.*

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Mr. Sebastian Haffner will be replying to his critics and continuing the discussion in the next number.

* As an autobiographical note I should add that in 1952 I favoured the neutralisation of Germany as a whole, *i.e.*, the acceptance of Stalin's offer, even though that offer had more strings attached than Mr. Haffner is now ready to admit. My reasoning was that if the Communists wanted to cheat us we could cheat the Communists by out-

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Bonn's West European-American policy, on the other hand, was not only realistic by comparison with its sermonising about reunification: it was immensely successful. West German prosperity, West European prosperity, freedom of movement, and a relaxed atmosphere all flowed from it. Bonn won the confidence of the West as no Berlin-based government of a German *Reich* could ever have done. West Germany could be integrated into Western Europe: a united Germany never. Thus, West Germany acquired allies whom she could only gain as West Germany and could not seriously hope to interest in the cause of reunification. The alliance and its success contradicted the ostensible aims of the alliance itself. Admittedly, the Bonn politicians could not concede this, except perhaps tacitly (as for example in a recently published statement by Professor Hallstein which paraded the successes and hopes of the European economic community with justifiable pride but made absolutely no mention of Germany's Eastern Zone). Others have been less reticent. In his book *Bonn ist nicht Weimar*, published in 1957, the shrewd Swiss observer F. R. Allemann wrote that European integration and German reunification were diametrically opposed.

They were opposed not only from the point of view of European institutions but, far more strongly, from the other side. No Russian government, not even that of the Tsars, would permit its own share of the German spoils to be amalgamated with West Germany, Western Europe, and the Atlantic Pact system. It could not do so without bringing about the downfall of its own system. No government does such a thing voluntarily. The West's continually reiterated demand for "free all-German elections" and an "all-German government" based on them was, under the circumstances, as meaningless as a parrot-squawk.

BERLIN, writes Mr. Haffner, functioned in three ways: as a symbol of eventual German unity, as a shop-window for democracy, and as a haven for those in quest of freedom. It lost the latter function on August 13th and with it, to a large extent, its function as a shop-window. The promise of German national unity, however, had of necessity carried less and less conviction with each year that divorced the prospect of its fulfilment from reality. It is now a moot point whether a permanently unfulfilled promise of this kind may not create more human misery than political well-being. The Four-Power Statute had long ceased to exist because there were no longer four Powers but three locked in a cold war with one. In practice, we hold West Berlin not because it is the last relic of quadripartite administration in Germany; nor because it is a guarantee of ultimate German unity; nor because West Berliners, admirable though they may be, are worth fundamentally more than the people of Thuringia or Mecklenburg; nor because Berlin possesses a special, historic, global, strategic, absolute, or mystic importance. The adage: "He who has Berlin has Germany; he who has Germany has Europe" is too presumptuous to be true. We hold Berlin and have to hold it because we have promised its inhabitants that we shall do so; not for any other reason.

When the Russians assert that the Berlin Four-Power Statute is an historical anachronism they are speaking the literal truth. It is immaterial what they hope to gain by saying so and equally immaterial at whose door the blame for this development should be laid. When the Devil is right we should give him his due. We could also take the Devil at his word and replace West Berlin's obsolete status with something better and more durable.

How disadvantageous to the West the unrealistic Berlin Four-Power Statute now is, became clear after August 13th. The logical rejoinder to Ulbricht's *coup de main*, which incorporated East Berlin into the territory of the *D.D.R.*, would have been to incorporate West Berlin into the Federal Republic. But that was just what the Western Powers could not do because the outmoded nature of their rights in Berlin forbade it.

On the German side, the belief that Berlin is still the German capital (or must eventually become so) is an echo of the irretrievable past. No one—apart from philosophers like Karl Jaspers, or reputedly cranky journalists like Paul Wilhelm Wenger of the *Rheinischer Merkur*—has ever asked himself what the Federal Republic really is. No one has ever asked under what historical circumstances Berlin became the German capital (a destiny for which it was surely never intended), or what the disappearance of those circumstances must lead to, or what new system could be substituted for the old. This dearth of constructive criticism ties in with the observation made earlier: that we have acted on the basis of a Federal Republic coupled with Europe while preaching a German *Reich*, just as though the outcome of Hitler's war could be devoid of cataclysmic and lasting consequences.

The problem is to give West Berlin a status more permanent than a mere right of occupation and to invest it with an historical signifi-

playing them in the all-German context while still maintaining fruitful relations with Western Europe and America. It is idle to speculate to-day whether such a policy could have succeeded. The time for it is past.

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cance less moribund than that of a former or potential "national capital." Newspaper writers have suggested that the U.N. headquarters be transferred to Berlin, and reports have recently gone the rounds, spread by many travellers, that Khrushchev would have no objection to such a transfer. The idea is almost too good to be true. As the "world capital," West Berlin would be freshly guaranteed. East Berlin would then become the "shop-window"—Communism's shop-window—there for all the world to see, and certain to make a bad impression unless it were stocked with decidedly better goods. Could anything be more incomprehensible than the recent statement by the Bonn Foreign Office that a U.N. transfer to West Berlin would be "unwelcome"?

WHAT APPLIES to Berlin, namely the advisability of *diverting* Khrushchev's offensive instead of simply repulsing it—which would neither improve nor settle anything—applies to the Eastern Zone and Germany as a whole.

Mr. Haffner speaks of an imminent "Munich." Such historical analogies are inherently dubious. He recalls that Munich was followed by the Stalin-Hitler Pact, but he forgets that the Stalin-Hitler Pact was followed by Hitler's war against Russia, and that in all probability this lesson is also exerting an admonitory influence on Russian policy. In any case, the vague term "Munich" means, if anything at all, to give a great deal away and get nothing in return. And that is far from being the only tactical alternative open to the West if it rejects Mr. Haffner's own alternative (not that Mr. Haffner ever says what his alternative really is).

In fact, Mr. Haffner's thoughts are on a mistaken course. Khrushchev, he believes, does not particularly care about recognition of the *D.D.R.*, because he is probably aware how vacuous "recognitions" are these days. This is, of course, quite correct. It did not help Austria and Czechoslovakia to be "recognised" in Hitler's day. It does the Baltic peoples no good that their States are still recognised in Washington to-day. It does Communist China no harm that she still remains unrecognised by the United Nations; on the contrary, she grows stronger every year. Things exist for as long as they exist, whether they are recognised or not; when they no longer exist they exist no longer, whether or not they have been recognised. In fact, recognition has sometimes proved a better way of debilitating things and ultimately consigning them to limbo than non-recognition. But if Khrushchev is fundamentally indifferent towards recognition of the *D.D.R.* it is hard to understand why the Germans set such immense store by non-recognition—and recognition of the *D.D.R.* would, in Mr. Haffner's words, mean the destruction of Konrad Adenauer's life's work. Dr. Adenauer's life's work is *not*, however, the "non-recognition of the *D.D.R.*" It is the Federal Republic, Franco-German friendship, and European institutions. Compared with this, non-recognition of the *D.D.R.* is only a negative corollary. The limitations of this eminent statesman's achievements are precisely that he has never tried in earnest to tackle the problem of the Eastern Zone of Germany and the underlying problem of German-Polish relations.

ONE THING IS CERTAIN: the absence of all formal and material relations between the West (including West Germany) and the *D.D.R.* has not improved actual living conditions among the people of the Eastern Zone in the slightest; rather, conditions in the Zone have deteriorated continuously in the past twelve years and the position of its tyrannical rulers has grown ever stronger. One thing is probable: the same policy will enjoy no greater measure of success in the next twelve years. As for the assertion that "things must get worse before they can get better," such an evaluation is as inhuman as it is equivocal. The Russians showed in Budapest that they are quite capable of mastering outbursts due to intolerable living conditions—and that in this respect the "neutral" world is prepared to excuse in them what it would never excuse in Americans or Europeans. I do not know why this should be so, but so it is.

Nevertheless, the West should not recognise the *D.D.R. in its present form*, much less compel the Federal Republic to do so. We cannot give official recognition to a concentration camp. Whether within the framework of international or inter-German negotiations, the following requirements must be fulfilled: the transformation of the *D.D.R.* into a constitutional socialist State, roughly modelled on Poland; a general amnesty for those convicted of political offences, such amnesty to be reciprocal (*i.e.*, the Federal Republic would have to release its handful of convicted Communists); and free cultural intercourse between East and West Germany. It would have to be made clear that the economic institutions of the *D.D.R.* are in themselves a matter of indifference to us; and, above all, it would have to be made clear that the *D.D.R.* lies within the borders of Russia's sphere of influence and must continue to lie there as long as the cold war continues and as long as West Germany voluntarily—"voluntarily" being a moral, not a

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power-political term—lies within the American sphere of influence. These would be concessions on the part of the West, but concessions which would bring valuable returns. One can debate the comparative importance of international power-politics and the happiness or misery of real people, but if nothing can be gained in the field of international politics it is better to concentrate on human realities.

The German right to "national unity" can never be voiced with realism and honesty as long as the cold war lasts and West Germany herself participates in it. So long as that is so, the rules of strategy and power will operate, and not those of right and morality. Nobody ever tries to talk an enemy into vacating a captured stronghold in war-time because his opponents have a "better right" to it. A lost stronghold has to be retaken, or, if that is impossible, the plight of its captive garrison eased by an attempt to negotiate an armistice. In other words there is no point, if it comes to negotiations, in trying to exact from the Russians what cannot be exacted under the terms of power-politics. There is no point, because they will undoubtedly refuse and because to put an opponent in the wrong yet again is a cheap and idle form of self-indulgence.

It may very well be that, as Mr. Haffner thinks, Khrushchev would be unwilling to see a recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, but that is no reason why we should reject it for all time. The Oder-Neisse line is not a Russo-American but a *German-Polish* question. Matters will have to be settled between Germany and Poland sometime, and such a settlement would, by establishing confidence between Poland and the Federal Republic, do much to rob the reign of terror in the Eastern Zone of its *raison d'être*.

To SUM UP: the Khrushchev-instigated Berlin crisis ought to be used for some worthier purpose than a mere defence of the *status quo*. It should be diverted into an attempt to settle the outstanding problems of Germany's existence. The prerequisites of such an attempt are constructive imagination, realism, honesty, and clarity, not only in Washington or London but, above all, in Bonn. The Federal Republic must be not the victim but rather the agent of such a settlement. Why talk of a "Munich"? Why talk of Germany's being "sold out" by her allies?

Should none of this be practicable, however —should West Berlin be unable to acquire any more solid or meaningful status than at present —should it prove impossible to secure freer living conditions for the inhabitants of the Eastern Zone or a more trustful relationship between the Federal Republic and Poland— then there will still be time to return to the defence of an unhealthy and explosive *status quo*. There will still be time to shoot when the enemy shoots.

Golo Mann

Alternatives to Backwardness

Thoughts from Poona — By ANDREW SHONFIELD

THERE is a favourite story told by national income statisticians about a national income statistician who was arrested in a brothel. The story purports to be about sex but is really about the national income: the brothel statistician claimed to be increasing it. "You may have noticed," he told his captors, "that the rate of economic growth in our country has been lagging behind our neighbours. All can do their duty by taking advantage of any opportunity for the production of more marketable goods and services. As you see, I am operating in the services sector." Asked why he did not do this decently at home with his wife, he explained impatiently that this would miss the whole purpose of the exercise. "I would add nothing to the country's output of wealth, if I coddled myself in that way. It is just like the difference between a man who goes for a country walk and one who goes to the cinema. The former uses something that is there already; the latter buys a service which has to be produced for him. He helps to mobilise under-employed resources for use by the market—just as I do."

The end of the story is that the statistician is shipped off to do his worst in an underdeveloped country. Of all places, the traditional society is of course where people expect to get their pleasures and entertainment for nothing. Since these things cost nothing to produce, the

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conventions of our current economic arithmetic treat them as being worth nothing. It is only when they are replaced by commercial entertainment—cinema shows, radio and television programmes, professional sport, and so on—that they show up as an addition to the national product. That is also true of other traditional services that people provide to one another. The result is that a society going through a process of profound impoverishment, because its traditional welfare services and amusements were being extinguished, might nevertheless show a sharp rise in its national income, because of the introduction of some expensive form of commercial entertainment for those able to pay for it.

The general point that emerges is that the choice of the particular goods and services, which are used to measure the rate of progress of poor countries, is often quite arbitrary. So are the prices. It does not follow, however, that people are much richer than they seem when they are still close to a state of nature; what is important to notice is that the factors selected to chart the material progress of a traditional society, once it has started to move forward, are neither a refined nor accurate indicator of what is really happening. Sometimes the statistics are positively misleading. They make honest economic planners in an underdeveloped country believe that they are being guided by some objective standard, which tells them how to use scarce national resources to produce as much wealth as possible, whereas the truth is that the figures frequently have a built-in political bias of a conservative character, which tends to reinforce a certain kind of social framework.

CONSIDER THE FAMILIAR CASE of a country in the early stages of industrialisation, with a government which is battling to hold down the prices of the basic necessities of life, especially food, in the face of the usual inflationary forces that are released by a modern industrial revolution. The result is that the things which are most urgently needed by the mass of the population tend to be priced artificially low, while Western-type manufactured consumer goods, on which the new and the old middle classes are prepared to lavish large sums of money, are sold at very high prices. It is characteristic of a society in this phase of development, for example India or Mexico, that the profits of the new class of *entrepreneurs* are huge and grow very fast, while wages are miserable and are kept down by the competitive pressure of people leaving the land and trying to force their way into the industrial labour market. Everything therefore combines at this stage to bid up the prices of the standard Western middle-class consumer goods, which are wanted by the rich, and to attract enterprise into this type of business. In the end the figures may show big increases in the national income of countries which force the production of the frills of life and neglect the basic necessities. If on the contrary the planners of India put an honest price on the production of an extra one million tons of grain—honest in the sense of reflecting the true scarcity value of this food to that part of the population which lives at the margin of subsistence, while at the same time correcting the bias given to the market by the social accident which has concentrated purchasing power in the hands of a favoured minority—then the return shown by certain investments in agriculture,* compared with industry, would be quite different.

THIS is a crucial issue, because at the moment such decisions of policy are being muddied and confused by the economic technicians, who arrive on the scene with the aura of men propelled by objective calculations which will brook no resistance. The most dangerous are the really brilliant technicians, like Colin Clark. They use so much imagination in finding the relevant question to be asked. Clark, for example, boldly calculates at what point investment in Indian agriculture ceases to be worthwhile and comes up with the conclusion that it is "uneconomic" for the Indians to try to irrigate land if the well-water available there has to be lifted from a depth of more than eleven metres. This is a startling recommendation which could have a profound effect on the lives of many millions of people. It is reached on the basis of a calculation of the capital cost of constructing a well and of the "return" from it, measured of course in terms of the current market prices of crops, compared with what the same money would produce if invested in industry. He tells the Indians that they should, when investing in agriculture, regard a ten per cent money return on their capital—in the form of a water rent, for example, to be collected from peasants—as the minimum requirement, "on the ground that such a rate of return on capital can be easily earned in industry and commerce in India."†

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* *i.e.* The money which consumers would be prepared to pay for the food if there were more employment and they had the opportunity to increase their earnings.

† *The Economics of Irrigation in Dry Climates*, by Colin Clark, Oxford Institute for Research in Agricultural Economics. [Mr. Clark has sent us the following comment: I was aware that certain manufactured goods (for the reasons given by Shonfield) in India may be priced higher, and food priced lower than they should be to represent their

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Thus out of seemingly innocent academic exercises portentous decisions grow. We ought not to overlook the fact that undeveloped countries nowadays take intellectuals a great deal more seriously than Western countries did during a comparable stage of their growth. The intellectual is after all supposed to hold the secret of accelerating the whole process of producing wealth; he has taken over the same sort of place as the "small businessman" in the North American myth. With that much trust imposed in us, an instinct for uncertainty needs to be cultivated.

I AM ABLE to report that I saw signs of a new mood of self-criticism among Western economists at the seminar held in Poona earlier this year under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, which spent a week discussing "Paths to Economic Growth." There was altogether much less confidence about our knowledge of the secret of economic growth than there would have been at any similar gathering even a few years ago. Indeed I felt at times that the two African members of the seminar, both from very newly independent countries, who had come along with the expectation of getting some clear answers to the problems of economic planning, were likely to go away saddened and burdened with more hesitation. The Indians on the other hand managed, as is their wont, to get a great deal out of this exchange of uncertainties—and to add some more of their own to the aggregate. The chairman of the conference, Professor Gadgil (Director of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, and a veteran economist of the moderate Left) succeeded in purveying his own deep sense of disappointment over the failure of his personal dream of a planned Indian society, with social justice and economic growth moving forward together step by step and hand in hand. Was it an accident of politics that the dream had failed to materialise or was it something inherent in the limitations of economic planning? Gadgil seemed to be sure that it was all a matter of politics; but most of the rest of us were rather more sceptical.

However, the sceptics were united on little else than their scepticism. How wide the differences really were between them became clear, paradoxically, as a result of a curious and profoundly gentle lecture on the politics of development by Jayaprakash Narayan, the former head of the Indian Socialist party and present disciple of Vinobha Bhave (leader of the land gift movement) who descended on the conference unexpectedly with that characteristic unhurried manner of the oriental saint, neatly dressed, clean, self-absorbed, living somehow on air and looking moderately well fed on it. His head has a broad Teutonic look with sharply defined edges to the chin and jaws; the nose is unobtrusive and without much shape, again a rather North European feature, set on a long upper lip; even the colour of skin is hardly more than tanned Middle European. If he had been introduced as an eccentric professor of distinction from Heidelberg, I should not have been very surprised. The only thing that might have given him away is his air of a man with the habit of being listened to in reverence by many. Where does one encounter such authority, unbacked by position or status, in the West?

PERHAPS THE ATMOSPHERE of spiritual co-existence conjured up by such a man naturally precipitates sharp disagreements among intellectuals, because having assented to so much, they cast around the more energetically to discover on what grounds precisely they differ from one another. Narayan's chief point was that in choosing a development policy the poor nations of to-day must not rely on the same *motives* as those which had led to the increase in productive power in the West. He was, he said, as keen as anyone to have the additional productive power given by modern industry in India, but not at the social and spiritual cost which he felt the West had paid in the past, and was still paying.

It was interesting to observe the strongly sympathetic chord stirred in the Western economists present by Narayan's picture of an idyllic industrial society, rich, productive, yet avoiding the urban discomforts and ugliness, as well as the centralisation of power, which have accompanied industrialisation everywhere so far. The Asians and Africans seemed to be less impressed by his idea—though no one could fail to be carried away a little by Narayan's curious four-square charm of manner and also by what can best be described as a kind of common-sense holiness that he manages to convey in his person. One notices that while he expresses his views slowly, patiently, with total confidence, like a skilled handloom operator unravelling a tangled skein of wool, his sandalled foot kicks from the crossed knee back and forth with a nervous rhythm underneath the table. The underlying diffidence of the personality reflected in the

true value to India. For this reason I made my calculation at world prices. Shonfield is entitled to plan his wells deeper if he thinks (i) that the relative urgency of the need for more food in India is greater than is indicated by world prices—but, after all, India has very urgent needs for certain manufactures too; (ii) that Indian manufacturers could not in fact earn 10 per cent profit, if they sold at world prices.—EDITORS.]

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secret movement below the trestle table somehow contributed to the force of his message.

THERE were several quite different strands detectable in the markedly favourable response of the Western economists to Narayan's ideas. Before he spoke we had, so to say, softened ourselves up by a critical examination of our own techniques for measuring economic progress which we had wished on to the underdeveloped countries. We had also observed that they had responded by forcing the pace of those particular things which we had decided to measure. But I was frankly surprised at the violence of the antipathy shown by the Westerners towards the Western way of life. There was an illusion too that the underdeveloped countries could be somehow anæsthetised against the revolutionary social and psychological effects of the economic change which we all said we wanted to bring about quickly.

But how quickly? One strand of thought voiced by Mr. E. F. Schumacher (of the National Coal Board), who is very close to Narayan, emphasised the need to protect, above all else, the process of "organic growth." Planning of development on this view would be as much concerned to avoid the introduction of new manufactured products, like cheap standard soap, which would put the established makers of more primitive detergents in the villages out of business. It was wrong to try and hurry the pace of development, if this meant risking the destruction of any part of the social framework, which could be shown to be giving people important spiritual or social satisfactions. This is admittedly an extreme view. But it is based on feelings which are shared, without being honestly thought through in this rigorous manner, by many people who are appalled by the sheer ugliness of the consequences of early industrialisation in the peasant societies of Asia where development is just beginning. Schumacher sharply rejects the Japanese model of growth—the example usually held up in the West as the demonstration that capitalism can make it—indeed regards it as having caused profound spiritual damage to the Japanese people themselves.

BUT SUPPORT FOR THE NARAYAN VIEW also came from the most enthusiastically pro-Japanese member of the seminar, Colin Clark. It so happened that the arrival of Professor Yamamoto in Poona was delayed, so Clark took it on himself to represent Japan. He did it with gusto. "When our divine Emperor Meiji introduced compulsory universal elementary education in 1889," he began, looking every inch an outsize Australian and a born disrespecter of persons. His theme, which he has since developed in his pamphlet on *"Growthmanship,"** was that the decisive factor in development is not investment in things but the change in the attitudes of people, particularly as a result of universal education. He is, of course, right that this psychological factor in development tends to be underplayed or even completely ignored by economists, because it is so elusive and difficult to measure. The trouble with Clark is that when he has a perfectly good argument like this to deploy, he drives it as if it were an express train until it crashes and overturns in a siding. Thus he proceeds at the end of *"Growthmanship"* to lay down a set of ten commandments, the ninth of which reads as follows:

> Loans to underdeveloped countries should not be used to strengthen the authority of governments *vis-à-vis* spontaneous private initiative and so intensify authoritarian tendencies. They should, therefore, as far as possible be channelled through non-government institutions, firms, and individuals.

What this means in plain language is: "Don't plan! Don't use the state as an instrument of economic development." And the moral and political motives which are mixed into Clark's argument are indicated in an earlier commandment (number 3):

> Governments ... should avoid attempting to force accelerated growth, since to do so is to risk impeding it and destroying individual liberties in the process.

Here again there is the implied assumption (as in Narayan and Schumacher) of some *known* natural pace of organic growth, to which the human spirit is adapted. "Human factors develop steadily but slowly," we are told by Clark. "Attempts ... to force the pace may waste capital." Whereas Schumacher foresees spiritual disaster in any attempt to speed up development through a programme of large-scale industrialisation,† Clark asserts flatly that it cannot be hurried up at all, arguing with the aid of a lot of subtle figuring that the impression of rapid growth in the Soviet Union and other planned economies is an illusion. Clark is a man with boundless confidence in the precision of his own techniques of measurement and he deploys them vigorously in support of his thesis that investment is not a decisive factor

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* Hobart Paper No. 10 (Barrie & Rockliff, 1961).

† Schumacher also argues that very often it is economically disastrous too, because the resultant loss of production in the traditional sectors of the economy is greater than the value of the additional output produced by big industry.

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in development. Even though many of the conclusions agree, the method is as remote as it could be from the Schumacher-Narayan approach, which is altogether sceptical of the ability of existing economic techniques to measure anything very useful about the rate of human progress.

SOME OF the Indian university dons at the Poona seminar made a frontal assault on the Clark position. Was it, they asked, his desire, as a good Catholic holding strong views on birth control, to prove at all costs that rapid population increase was itself good for economic growth, which led him to the conclusion that the amount of capital per head did not have much influence on productivity and material progress? At times it seems that Colin Clark takes a completely slap-happy view of the population explosion: the more people there are, the larger the quantum of "human factors" accelerating the process of economic growth. What matter if each of them has a smaller quantity of productive capital at his disposal?

The truth is that even if the human factor is the decisive one in determining the pace of economic development, we still need a lot of investment in new capital equipment to provide the vehicle for the human factor. Nations which displace their old equipment fast, like Germany and Russia, do better than countries like Britain, which cling to the old. Where Clark makes an important contribution is in his insistence that far from there being a law of diminishing returns on capital as time goes on—in the way that classical economic theory assumes—capital assets are all the time becoming increasingly efficient and productive. A given amount of investment tends to give rise to a larger output nowadays than it did in the past. This in my view is an argument for speeding up the process of capital replacement and technical reorganisation, so as to take advantage of the scientific discoveries which make modern equipment, and the new forms of industrial organisation that go with it, more efficient. But for Clark in his tirade against "growthmanship" it provides another piece of ammunition to be fired off against his favourite target—the doctrine that "the growth of output is supposed to depend upon further capital investment"! It is curious that he never even considers the possibility that because modern science makes capital more and more efficient, it is reasonable to try to make the most of our technological opportunities—through more research and more investment.

THERE IS ALSO THE POINT that the introduction of the modern machine is important because it often provides the one means of imposing new work disciplines on people who are spiritually committed to traditional and inefficient methods of production. But Clark's suggestion is that the same end can be achieved more securely and on a larger scale by means of universal primary education, which will itself lead to a readiness to adopt modern techniques on the farm and in the small workshop, as well as in the factory. He believes that the Japanese economic achievement of the past half century is due to the early adoption of compulsory primary education more than to any other factor. It is this emphasis on the spiritual factor as the key to economic growth which is the nexus between Clark and Narayan. On many other matters they are wide apart. But they are agreed in opposing the standard industrial technique for speeding up development—Narayan because in order to hurry it is necessary to distort the social structure by concentrating available resources on some place or sector of the economy which is given a crucial role in the process of acceleration; Clark because he rejects the notion that anything much can happen until people's minds are changed by a long process of education.

IN THE END I was struck by a certain insouciance which seemed to me to taint both of these positions. At any rate neither of them seemed to have taken account of the need for something which would give the production of goods an early and decisive lift, so that the living standards of the average citizen of Asia would not be degraded by the rising pressure of population during the next two decades. Narayan's principle makes it impossible to concentrate on the "growing points" of the economy of a poor country: the places where capitalist enterprise is taking hold and big profits are beginning to be made are clearly not those which can claim a larger share of the nation's capital on grounds of abstract justice. But the alternative rule proclaimed by Vinobha Bhave and Narayan—"those at the bottom must be raised first"—is merely a guarantee that the requirements of economic growth will be ignored whenever they conflict with the objectives of straightforward charity. The rule means giving preference to the needs of this generation over those of the next generation. The only way out for the planner in Narayan's society is to rely on the practice of charity to make for a readiness to reduce personal consumption, wherever this is necessary to save resources for investment to meet society's future needs. But there is nothing to show so far that this kind of diffused austerity provides a reliable basis for a policy of rapid economic growth.

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Is it inevitable, then, that in attempting to avoid the massive squalor and the inhuman pressures which are the standard accompaniments of the early stages of industrialisation we shall be condemning the underdeveloped countries to a slower rate of economic growth than they could achieve by following the conventional methods?

There are two aspects to this question. One concerns the human attitudes that go with an acquisitive dynamic society; it is arguable that covetousness and greed are essential elements in this dynamic, that an intense desire to accumulate more possessions is the central motor of the bourgeois spirit driving capitalism forward. The other aspect concerns the social effects of a big and successful drive to raise the level of production in a traditional society. Is there no alternative to the overwhelming concentration of industry in a few towns, the draining of vitality out of the villages, the centralisation of economic and political power?

Professor Michael Postan (the Cambridge economic historian) passionately deployed a mass of historical evidence at Poona to show that this second process was by no means a necessary condition for rapid economic growth. He inveighed against the current fashion in underdeveloped countries of treating giant steel mills as "objects of tribal worship." Economic success and industrial centralisation did not necessarily go together. On the contrary, some of the richest societies in Scandinavia and Switzerland had been built up out of the independent initiatives of small groups in small communities. It was wrong, he argued, to think of the traditional peasant as a reactionary, or at best passive element in the process of economic development. In Denmark, for example, he was precisely the opposite. Given the right conditions and encouragement, and the positive decision by the Government that peasant agriculture is to be helped wherever possible to *make itself* competitive, important new energies of a political as well as an economic character could be mobilised among the farmers. He instanced the peasant co-operatives which grew up in Siberia during the period just before the Bolshevik Revolution and showed extraordinary vigour, before they were brought to an untimely end. At the technical level, Postan maintained, we tend to over-estimate the benefits of large-scale industry in underdeveloped countries. At the human level we under-estimate the possibility of important new initiatives emerging independently at many different points in the economic system, once the central authorities have created the ground-work which will help these independent efforts to come to fruition. Thus, for example, cheap electric power must be made available in the villages if the ungainly concentration of industry and the spectacular misery of the great urban slums of India are to be avoided.

It is, of course, no accident that Sweden and Switzerland, the outstanding examples of the alternative path of economic development, both started off with abundant hydro-electric power. India does not. Narayan himself pointed out that at the rate of advance now foreseen it would take another thirty years before electricity reached all the villages of India.

How in that case, I asked him, was he going to be able to sustain his policy of fair shares for the most needy—"those at the bottom must be raised first"—and at the same time provide enough additional electricity for any promising new centres of industrial initiative to get ahead? If the successful enterprises, whether in industry or in agriculture, are fed with additional supplies, they will, at any rate in the short term, be keeping some other village in darkness. In the long run, of course, the policy of favouring the vigorous productive enterprise with extra supplies leads to a more rapid creation of wealth; and with any luck this process is cumulative, because the successful producers are often inclined to invest a lot of their wealth in capital assets, which then help them to produce still more. But Narayan would have none of this—consistently enough, since he was unwilling to tolerate the personal greed which would lead a man to wish to accumulate more assets than his fellows. Once again he refused to accept the distinction between a plan of development and a plan of organised charity.

But even the more modest objectives set by Postan would, I believe, be extraordinarily difficult to attain in a country like India. It was one of the Indian economists at Poona, Amlan Datta, who had travelled 1,500 miles from his native Calcutta, who pointed out that perhaps the most powerful factor making for the steady concentration of industry in a few over-populated urban centres was finance. You had a tremendous advantage if you were near Bombay or Delhi or Madras and could get directly at a bank with a surplus of funds available for lending at a reasonable rate of interest. If you had to rely on the local money-lender in some out-of-the-way place, you might easily have to pay up to 24 per cent interest a year. It would be almost impossible to build up a normally profitable small enterprise on that basis.

There was a strong feeling among some of the Indians that if only the authorities tried they could readily overcome this financial handicap of scattered small-scale industry. All

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that was required, it was alleged, was the will to redress some of the artificial disadvantages suffered by those who set up their enterprises away from the main centres. I believe that this is too facile: there are very powerful reasons of convenience and cost behind the tendency of new industries to congregate in one place and create a monstrous slum. A visit to the Indian Reserve Bank in Bombay made it clear to me that the other side of the go-getting entrepreneur's feeling that he will be able to get finance more easily and cheaply in the big city is the bank's conviction that it is much easier to watch and supervise what is going on if the borrower's business is fairly close at hand. That is particularly important when the bank is dealing with the marginal case—the new man with a small business and little security to offer, who is really asking for a loan on the basis of his reputation and his ideas. It is a great help if the bank official can call on him easily, with the minimum of formality, and see what he is actually doing.

Of course, if there were lots of bank officials available to travel many hundreds of miles across country to outlying places and foster a new race of entrepreneurs there, there would be no problem. But such people are scarce: being a bank official, who can sympathise with and yet remain detached from the people who are trying to turn a fast rupee by some more or less risky scheme, is a highly skilled occupation. It requires personal integrity and a special kind of imagination, as well as straightforward expertise. Indeed, when one comes to look at this problem more closely from some central vantage point, like the Reserve Bank of India, one is struck by the resemblance between finance and the physical resources like electric power—which is also in short supply and unfairly distributed. You naturally get your power more easily if you set up your workshop right in the middle of the area served by an electricity station, which usually means a big city, than if you go to the other end of a transmission line that has still to be built.

THERE IS ONE FURTHER POINT that tends to be overlooked or obscured by the advocates of decentralisation and the small-scale industry approach to development. In order to create the basic substructure in which the seeds of this type of enterprise can sprout and flourish, it is necessary to engage in production on a vast scale. An obvious example, once again, is electric power. Until there is plentiful power in the villages they cannot hope to compete for a share of the prizes of modern industry and agriculture. But to build generating stations of the type which is most economical to-day, with single sets of up to 500,000 kilowatts, requires huge engineering factories and big metallurgical industries.

The Indians and the other countries which have concentrated a lot of their energies on big metal and engineering projects have not been wilfully obtuse—as is sometimes suggested by the advocates of the small enterprise in economic development. There is no doubt that the small enterprise is more attractive and causes less social upheaval and misery. Its contribution is also too easily overlooked by the modern planner—particularly in agriculture. But the idea that it presents the opportunity for a basically different approach to development in Asia, Africa, and Latin America seems, on the evidence, implausible. At best, it offers an alternative only to those who are prepared to accept a slower pace of development, in spite of the population explosion and the unsatisfied elementary needs of the bulk of the people in underdeveloped countries.

MY CONCLUSION is that rapid economic development in poor countries is likely to remain peculiarly ugly to look at. This is sad. But it seems to me to be one of the consequences of being in a tearing hurry. Where economists could be really helpful at the moment would be in establishing better techniques for measuring the relevant factors in economic growth, as a traditional society begins to move forward into a higher gear. As so often happens, the devotion to the ideal of precision at all costs leads the technicians to attach inordinate importance to the factors that they happen to be able to measure—whereas the truth about these factors is often not that they are important but that they are just familiar to the people who have been responsible for setting up the conventional methods of measurement.

Muggeridge and the Monarchy

THE MONARCHY suffers from the good intentions of those who want to keep it under a coat of icing sugar. It is part of our constitution: to insulate it from all criticism, to embalm

Jo GRIMOND, M.P.—*leader of the Liberal Party—continues the discussion by Malcolm Muggeridge (The Queen and I,* ENCOUNTER, *July 1961) and Henry Fairlie (Thoughts on the Monarchy,* ENCOUNTER, *October 1961).*

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it at a particular stage of its development is more likely to kill than preserve it. Unfortunately for the Royal Family and its advisers, such sycophancy has grown up around the whole institution that it is difficult to have any rational discussion of it. Yet some rational discussion is needed, if only to get its fiercest critics to explain their alternative, and the perfervid traditionalists to realise that, unless it is simply to be preserved like a bouquet in a polythene bag, constitutional monarchy must change as our social life changes.

The importance of the monarchy lies in its expression of our judgment of values. It is an example of the quality of our society. It may have less political importance than some Presidencies but it has general importance as symbolising the way of life Britain admires. The influences which it personifies spread very wide. No Sovereign can, of course, strike too far out on any side of the Crown's duties. The Crown is always bound to be more a symptom than a cause. Indeed when among all the troubles of the world it is singled out for blame many people must feel with A. J. Balfour when he replied to Frank Harris's remark that all the faults of his age came from Christianity and journalism—"Christianity of course, but why journalism?" Nevertheless, the Crown's advisers might show a little more initiative.

THE COURT SHOULD give a lead to intelligent patronage of many sorts. For example, it could by its example have made it respectable for every local authority and big company to mind about the quality of its buildings and furnishings. It could have founded a Glyndebourne or continued with more enterprise the tradition of the Royal Picture Collections—or, if these activities don't appeal, promoted other and popular arts—anything so long as the importance of artistic taste was emphasised. Such patronage would not have been out of the reach of the public and private purse. Nor need it involve the Monarch personally in much extra effort.

Then, though the Royal Family make the most exhausting and triumphant tours, we have to give some thought to the provision of a permanent local focus in other countries of the Commonwealth besides England. Holyroodhouse is usually empty—and there is something missing in the old dominions which no Governor can supply. If we retain a constitutional monarchy as the symbolic head of each state in the Commonwealth, the monarch should not merely visit but reign for considerable periods outside England. If the Crown's advisers feel this to be impossible then they should give some thought to an alternative; countries eventually demand a focus if they are to retain their identity.

But the most formidable difficulty of the Crown at present is to avoid becoming too closely identified with the faults of an Establishment which is suffering from an overdose of conservatism. It would be absurd to expect any head of a state—whether King or President—to be a leader of Dissent. And, of course, there must be Establishments as a counterpoise to heresies and power-hungry adventurers. Anarchy and instability, however, are not pressing dangers. The present need is for a new departure—or at least more vigour in following up old departures. It is difficult to see a vigorous move forward politically without changes in our social life and our general outlook. Unless we are to accept a profoundly unsatisfactory society there must be an upset in the official attitudes to education, art, class-distinctions, and the network of semi-hereditary, semi-old school tie connections by which much of Britain is run.

Some Presidents can make a much more radical departure by bringing in new men and ideas than is possible in this country by changing the Cabinet—a change which simply brings in an alternative political leadership, ready-cut in advance, often dried with age and accompanied by no other changes in the general structure of influence. What at least its advisers should try to ensure is that the Crown does not find itself so closely identified with some of the faults of the ruling outlook of the last few decades that the new outlook feels out of all sympathy with it.

THE FAULTS are not far to seek. There is the snobbery and the class-consciousness which seems to have actually increased, so that we now take for granted pomposities designed as props to a rather uncertain self-esteem, which would have made our ancestors smile. There is the Conservative habit of hiding your head in the sands of the past so as to avoid thinking about the present. There is the distortion of vision which allows only the difficulty to every solution to be seen with clarity. There is the smacking of lips over every tit-bit which it is thought that the public digestion will not stomach. There is the insularity of much reaction to the Common Market, for instance, so that our European neighbours will soon think that tribal taboos begin at Dover. However much other exports lag, some people have not been behindhand in trying to export our troubles by blaming foreigners, immigrants, etc. There is the avoidance of any foresight, responsibility, or decision, and the general stuffiness and want of appetite for the future to be seen among Establishment figures, both of the Right and

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The Amazing Potentialities of Memory

LITTLE thought when I arrived at my friend Borg's house that I was about to see something truly extraordinary, and to increase my mental powers tenfold.

He had asked me to come to Stockholm to lecture to the Swedes about Lister and other British scientists. On the evening of my arrival, after the champagne, our conversation turned naturally to the problems of public speaking and to the great labour imposed on us lecturers by the need to be word perfect in our lectures.

Borg then told me that his power of memory would probably amaze me—and I had known him, while we were studying law together in Paris, to have the most deplorable memory!

So he went to the end of the dining room and asked me to write down a hundred three-figure numbers, calling each one out in a clear voice. When I had filled the edge of an old newspaper with figures, *Borg repeated them to me in the order in which I had written them down and then in reverse order, that is beginning with the last number. He also allowed me to ask him the relative position of different numbers: for example, which was the 24th, the 72nd, and the 38th, and I noticed that he replied to all my questions at once and without effort, as if the figures which I had written on the paper had been also written in his brain.*

I was dumbfounded by such a feat and sought in vain for the trick which enabled him to achieve it. My friend then said: "The thing you have just seen and which seems so remarkable is, in fact, quite simple; everybody has a memory good enough to do the same, but few indeed can use this wonderful faculty."

He then revealed to me how I could achieve a similar feat of memory, and I at once mastered the secret—without mistakes and without effort—as you too will master it tomorrow.

But I did not stop at these amusing experiments. I applied the principles I had learned in my daily work. I could now remember, with unbelievable facility, the lectures I heard and those which I gave myself, the names of people I met—even if it was only once—as well as their addresses, and a thousand other details which were most useful to me. *Finally, I discovered after a while that not only had my memory improved, but that I had also acquired greater powers of concentration; a surer judgement—which is by no means surprising since the keenness of our intellect is primarily dependent on the number and variety of the things we remember.*

If you would like to share this experience and to possess those mental powers which are still our best chance of success in life, ask C. S. Borg to send you his interesting booklet *The Eternal Laws of Success*—he will send it free to anyone who wants to improve his memory. Here is the address: *C. S. Borg, c/o Aubanel Publishers, 14 Highfield Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6, Ireland.*

Write now—while copies of this booklet are still available. L. CONWAY.

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the so-called Left. Bagehot said that the Crown provides a disguise. There is a temptation to use the skirts of popular and respected institutions to hide the shortcomings of our ruling system. And every favourable image now risks being exploited commercially. With the infiltration of public relations into everything, the modern Lord Melbourne no longer says, "It is not much matter what we say, but mind, we must all say the same thing," but "It is not much matter what we say, but mind, we must see that we can put it across and that it pays."

How is the Crown to keep apart from this malaise for which it is not responsible and which affects only a part of the nation, but a part closely associated with the whole Establishment system? Too much of this association might prevent the Monarchy making any move forward.

There are some specific things which could be done. The sort of initiative which the Duke of Edinburgh has shown in un-royal (at least since the Prince Consort's day) activities such as technical education, should be extended and used to draw the Crown into new fields and into natural contact with new people.

If this is to be done, the Royal Family must be relieved of some of the remorseless grind of inspecting, signing of documents, attending ceremonies, and giving interviews. If they are to meet new people, in new surroundings, some of those who regularly expect to surround them must stand aside. The Crown would be only too glad no doubt for some easing of the chains of an Establishment which percolates down through the whole of our society and which put a premium on conformity and knowing the right people.

The Crown's advisers should give a great deal of thought to the shifts in emphasis required by Heads of State in the modern world, especially when States are no longer Sovereign. For instance, so long as it was accepted that it was the first duty of a state to defend its citizens (preferably single-handed), there was an intimate and over-riding connection between the Sovereign and the troops. Now, in the days of interdependence and Polaris, the Sovereign should be seen to be closely associated also with such things as Aid to Asia and Africa, Refugee Year, Education and wider opportunities, in place of the "old boy" net in industry (here again, the Crown has in fact shown an interest in industrial relations). The exciting opportunities of the next twenty-five years are going to lie outside the Establishment stereotype and will cut across the boundaries of states. We are groping intellectually towards a whole new set of values, but they do not yet engage our emotions. No call to help underdeveloped countries, no enthusiasm for the United Nations or even the British Commonwealth, no pilot sketch of a more beautiful and humane Britain, arouses feelings like an appeal to nationalism accompanied as it can be by all the most telling symbols. The Crown could help in changing the emphasis of some public emotions. Now at the high-tide of its popularity it could probably carry off such a change. It would be difficult; but if it is not attempted in the long run the difficulties will be greater still—both for the country and for the Crown itself.

Jo Grimond

Armchair Shopping

Somewhere in this issue you should find a leaflet giving details of Encounter's Christmas Gift Offer, which enables you to send a subscription to your friends at greatly reduced rates. If the leaflet is missing, simply send the names and addresses of your friends (who should not, as far as you know, already be receiving the magazine), with 20s. (six months) or 35s. (one year) for each, to Encounter, 25 Haymarket, London S.W.1. American donors should send $3.25 or $6.50. Your gifts will start with the January issue (out just before Christmas)—Encounter's enlarged Hundredth Number. An announcement card will be sent to each recipient. This offer applies to the Christmas 1961 season only.

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Naked but not Dead

By George Steiner

At Matthausen they tied together the legs of women in childbirth. In the Warsaw ghetto they gave each family one less residence permit than it had children, compelling each mother to select one of her own children for immediate shipment to the ovens. We all now live under the imminent possibility of a mass death so complete that it will go unrecorded, that there will be none left to mourn or remember.

Either literature is about these things, or it is about nothing. That does not mean it must deal explicitly with the bestiality and menace which surround us (the finest novel to come of the war, Cozzens' *Guard of Honour*, does not even touch on actual combat). It means that literature, to be taken seriously, must recognise in man more terror and bruising than there has ever been, that it must see him in the light of what he has of late inflicted and endured. If literature is to be more than trivial entertainment, the artist must recognise the hideous enlargement in the range of possible experience. Floor and ceiling have collapsed in the house of the classic imagination. The cellar, as Dostoevsky foretold, gapes large. We torture in it and we take shelter.

Very few writers have had the nerve or insight to look at the new manner of man. They have acted as if all the ravenings and unknowns shadowing our time were exterior, as if the wounds and recoveries were merely of the flesh. To read most current fiction is to be given the illusion that nothing very drastic has happened, that the soul has passed no time in Dachau or under the sheen of the bomb. Admittedly, the artist courts a grave risk in being honest; he may fall silent. Like Moses, in the final, dread cry of Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, he may find that the word is no longer adequate. But if humane letters are to remain either humane or literate, the risk must be taken.

If we except William Golding, American fiction has shown more honesty in this regard than the current English novel. Salinger is a minor artist, often facile or mannered in his craft; but there is not a sentence in the inward rhetoric of his haunted personages that does not show the new, inhuman stress of the times. *Lolita* is, among many other things, a parable on the collapse of the classic conditions of feeling; Humbert Humbert is a displaced person, soul and body reft from their traditional moorings.

Norman Mailer* is among the honest men. He strives to know, at the peril of moral chaos, what it is that has been loosed upon the world and whether art can cope with it:

> Probably, we will never be able to determine the psychic havoc of the concentration camps and the atom bomb upon the unconscious mind of almost everyone alive in these years. For the first time in civilised history, perhaps for the first time in all of history, we have been forced to live with the suppressed knowledge that the smallest facets of our personality or the most minor projection of our ideas, or indeed the absence of ideas and the absence of personality, could mean equally well that we might still be doomed to die as a cipher in some vast statistical operation in which our teeth would be counted, and our hair would be saved, but our death itself would be unknown, unhonoured, and unremarked . . . a death by *deus ex machina* in a gas chamber or a radio-active city. . . . The Second World War presented a mirror to the human condition which blinded anyone who looked into it.

Mailer approaches his obsessive theme with a complicated set of masks, with a doctrine and language drawn from four principal values. He is by origin a Jew, and by vocation a Socialist, Hipster, and Writer.

To the Jewish tenor of mind fiction does not come easily. The Judaic tradition is narrowed and ennobled by the predominance of argument and verity. For obvious historical reasons, Jews

* *Advertisements for Myself*. André Deutsch, 21s.

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came late to *belles lettres*; but their approach to the novel—to the art of truthful lying—has retained a particular wariness. Kafka treated his art as if it was a vaguely embarrassing malady. Hermann Broch tended to think of fiction as something lacking ultimate seriousness; he moved away from his own novels towards epistemology and a psychology of politics. In fact, he wrestled continuously with the belief that in the face of man's present condition silence might be a better response than art.

Mailer's inheritance runs far below the surface. It scarcely appears in his conscious interests. Yet it helps account for two of his dominant traits. From the outset, Mailer has wanted to write "the big one," the novel or tract which would change men's social and moral existence. He is out "to trap the Prince of Truth" in order to direct the times towards a re-birth of the psyche. The other trait that speaks of Mailer's background is his frenzy for justice. It beats strong in *The Naked and The Dead*; it is the main theme in *Barbary Shore*, the sloppiest but most original of Mailer's novels. It has led him recently to a theodicy close to Kafka's and to some of the bleaker parables of the Talmud:

> God is in danger of dying. In my very limited knowledge of theology, this never really has been expressed before.... God is no longer all-powerful. The moral consequences of this are not only staggering, but they're thrilling, because moral experience is intensified rather than diminished. ... It's the only thing that explains to me the problem of evil. You see, the answer may well be—how to put it?—that God Himself is engaged in a destiny so extraordinary, so demanding, that He too can suffer from a moral corruption, that He can make demands upon us which are unfair, that He can abuse our beings in order to achieve His means, even as we abuse the very cells of our own body.

In short: *Dieu a besoin des hommes.*

Mailer's Socialism is a queer brew. It sprang originally from the kind of personal, lyric infatuation with Marx which affected a whole generation of the American intelligentsia. The great bearded one (in a lineage of charismatic beards stretching from Moses to Hemingway) seemed to have foretold all that was nasty, brutish, and chaotic in American life. An angry generation drank avidly of his parched dogmatism. In Mailer something of the thirst and of the gratitude remains: "I happen to have got more from Marx than from anyone else I've ever read. I wouldn't want to jettison Grandfather." But, as he says himself, Mailer has drifted away from orthodoxy.

He is now a kind of pastoral Socialist. I mean by that that his Socialism is founded primarily on a lyric image of private, domestic fulfilment, on a golden vision of a sensuous, liberated order of human relations in which economic, sexual, and political energies would gather to unison rather than tension. There is a touch of Thoreau in Mailer's Utopia, and more than a dash of D. H. Lawrence: "Deeper than the love of property is the fear of the past, the fear of the vitality of the lower classes, the fear that if all men were to walk the earth equal, the upper classes would not long survive." There is that characteristically American notion that the machinations of evil, psychically infirm men—men of power, men of money—have marred the promised land: "I believe it was destined, by history if you will, to be the greatest country that ever existed. I don't think it's come near it." The bastards have done us in. Often, in his garrulous scorn, Mailer comes very near to echoing Pound and Mencken:

> if I am to go on saying what my anger tells me is true to say, I must get better at overriding the indifference which comes from the snobs, arbiters, managers, and conforming maniacs who manipulate most of the world of letters.... There may have been too many fights for me, too much sex, liquor, marijuana, benzedrine and seconal, much too much ridiculous and brain-blasting rage at the miniscule frustrations of a most loathsome literary world, necrophilic to the core—they murder their writers, and then decorate their graves.

At the heart of Mailer's politics there is neither theory nor programme, but stark revulsion: "Just as people there's something godawful about the upper classes of America—they really are horrible people."

Opposed to them in a masked but decisive struggle for the salvation of the American soul is the Hipster. Mailer did not invent the type; it has roots in jazz and pacifism, in the *demi-monde* of the hobo and the drug addict. But he gave it definition in his famous essay "The White Negro." The Hipster is the man who knows that the quick of life is threatened continually with destruction by war or totalitarian rule or by the slow death of conformity. To survive, to "live with death," he must exist without roots and set out "on that uncharted journey into the rebellious imperatives of the self." One is Hip or one is Square; there is no middle road. One is a pioneer on the Wild West trail of drugs, sexual liberty, and racial intermingling, or a mere *petit bourgeois* "trapped in the totalitarian tissues of American society."

The Negro is the matchmaker of Hip; marijuana the wedding ring. Banded together in a conspiracy of dissent, scorning the facile values of established morals and culture, Hipsters live

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"in the enormous present." They seek to realise a communion of soul and sex outside the barren ground of modern life and find in orgasm a counterpart to the Holy Grail (Mailer's own image). Being "philosophical psychopaths," men dedicated to the fulfilment of the self in an ecstasy of action, they lash out at the habits and safeguards of traditional society. They are drifters, addicts, pimps, thieves, sometimes murderers; they murder out of the mystic necessity to purge their own violence, for if he cannot empty his hatred, the Hipster cannot love. And love, "as the search for an orgasm more apocalyptic than the one which preceded it," is his sacred quest.

If we cut away the verbiage and adolescent posturing in all this, there remains a doctrine of vehement candour and a bizarre yet compelling attempt to reassert the sanctity of private life against the pressures of a mass technocracy. In a queer but real sense, the Hipster is the monk of the present dark ages. His style of life alternates between austere repose and violent psychological stress. He has rejected the ambitions and comforts of the mundane world. Clad in his dark sweater, jeans, and sandals, the Hipster is a living indictment of the American dream—of the belief in material success and "well-adjustments." Moreover, he cannot easily be bought off. In England the anger of the young is an accepted prelude to the complacency of the old. After spending a decade hurling red bricks at the Establishment, Lucky Jim ends up at the most elegant of Cambridge high tables. Even if he should want to, the Hipster cannot climb back into the citadel. Drug-addiction or inter-racial marriage create a context of needs and attitudes from which there is hardly any possibility of return.

MAILER HIMSELF has gone very near the edge. He could have moved on from *The Naked and The Dead* to further peaks of commercial success. He chose instead a tortuous, idiosyncratic road calculated to rouse against him the powers that be. It has brought him close to professional and personal disaster. Nothing rings truer amid the sprawling sentimentality of *Advertisements for Myself* than Mailer's reckoning of the cost: "I am everything but my proper age of thirty-six, and anger has brought me to the edge of the brutal.... I started as a generous but very spoiled boy, and I seem to have turned into a slightly punch-drunk and ugly club fighter.... I've burned away too much of my creative energy."

That, surely, is the key point. What of the Writer? What have the self-destructive candours of Mailer's life and doctrine produced?

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At the start there was a raw talent and a control of mood which make *The Language of Men* a small masterpiece, a story Chekhov would have delighted in. What now?

After the unshaped energies and acuities of *Barbary Shore* came *The Deer Park*. It is a small, sour book with flashes of macabre wit. But the stimulants Mailer was taking at the time seem to have shifted the whole thing out of focus; it ends up whining. It falls far short of Nathanael West's goring of Hollywood. Since *The Deer Park*, there has been little except the screeds of polemic and confession now gathered in *Advertisements*.

There are fine moments in this acrid chronicle. Mailer conveys beautifully the nightmares of diminished power. But the sense of the self as a bruised, clamorous *persona* grows all-embracing. Like a diver trapped in weeds, Mailer seems unable to break surface. He seems incapable of believing in, or making credible, any identity outside his own. All voices have dwindled to echo. It is here that drugs and Hipster ecstasies take their toll; even the "ultimate orgasm" is a private Nirvana, incommunicable to others except by metaphors of music or common trance.

This solipsism of desire, the dilemma of final privacy in the act of sexual communion, has provoked Mailer to the best piece of writing he has ever done. *The Time of Her Time* is a marvel of ribaldry and compassion. It is a story of sexual encounter and near-conquest set in Greenwich Village, in the neutral zone where the Hipster meets the college girl to seduce and argue, to pit Reich against Freud and Trotsky against Stalin. In an alley of cool cats, the hero opens a school for bull-fighters. What follows is a battle more humorous and decisive than any *fæna*. All of Mailer's obsessions are concentrated and disciplined in this wry tale: the flailings and incompletions of lust, the poses struck by the uprooted heart, the need for words and gestures truer to the naked, anarchic beat of the time than any we possess. This wild, sad fable goes far towards justifying Mailer's sense of his own stature.

But the British reader will not find it in this book. It is "the considered opinion of some of the best legal and literary minds of the Realm," says Mailer, that "this piece cannot be printed in Britain." They are probably right (and the distinction points up neatly how much there is in *Lady Chatterley* of "safe" sentimental romance). *The Time of Her Time*, and other bits missing from the British edition of *Advertisements* are available in paperback at nearly any American drugstore. The story suggests that Mailer is not through yet, that he will stop being a case and start being a writer again.

From Marx to Moscow

Collected Works. By G. V. Plekhanov. *Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.*

Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism. *Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.*

"But there is no more difference between heaven and earth than between the dictatorship of a class and that of a group of revolutionary *raznochintsi*. This applies in particular to the dictatorship of the working class, whose present task is not only to overthrow the political domination of the unproductive classes in society, but also to do away with the anarchy now existing in production and consciously to organise all functions of social and economic life. The mere *understanding* of this task calls for an advanced working class with political experience and education.... But *such* a proletariat *will not allow* even the sincerest of its well-wishers to seize power. It will not allow it for the simple reason that it has been to the school of political education with the firm intention of finishing it at some time and coming forward as an independent figure in the arena of historical life, not to pass eternally from one guardianship to another...."

Some Menshevik writing after 1917? No, Plekhanov in 1883! The founder of Russian Social-Democracy, who was also for many years Lenin's teacher, made his political *début* with a lengthy pamphlet (*"Socialism and the Political Struggle"*) now reprinted in the Moscow edition of his *Collected Works*. And there, on p. 110 of vol. I, for all present-day Soviet citizens to read, one may find his anticipatory judgment on the "revolutionary *raznochintsi*" who a generation later repudiated his teachings. In 1883 he had been arguing against the surviving terrorists of the *Narodnaya Volya* who still believed in minority dictatorship run by themselves. He was not to know that years later one of his own pupils would go back on all the carefully fostered traditions of Social-Democratic Marxism, to revive the ancient heresy of Bakunin and Tkachev: dictatorship of and by the *raznochintsi* —the "intellectual proletariat"—now organised in the Bolshevik party and about to astonish the world.

At this distance in time there is a certain melancholy interest in noting that in 1883 Plekhanov—himself only recently converted to Marxist Socialism—believed that utopianism was on the way out. The radical intelligentsia had done its work. Now was the time for the genuine labour movement to take over:

> Anyhow, why speak so much of the *results* of the seizure of power by our revolutionaries? Is that seizure itself probable or even possible? In our opinion the probability is very small.... Our

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ROUTLEDGE PAPERBACKS

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> "thinking proletariat" has already done much for the emancipation of the motherland. It has shaken absolutism, aroused political interest among society, sown the seed of socialist propaganda among our working class. It is intermediary between the higher classes of society and the lower, having the education of the former and the democratic instincts of the latter. This position has eased for it the diversified work of propaganda and agitation. But this same position gives it very little hope of success in a conspiracy to seize power.

Lenin's organisational model was still in the future when this was written. To-day the publication of Plekhanov's writings is regarded as safe (for all that their author condemned the Bolshevik *coup d'état* in 1917). Had not Lenin acclaimed him as the teacher of an entire generation? But there is a better reason: the passage just quoted shows that the contrast between the two men must not be overdone. In some respects Lenin was able to build on the intellectual foundations laid by Plekhanov, and not least where the latter had artlessly suggested the future rationale of Leninism. If it was the intelligentsia which had "sown the seed of socialist propaganda among our working class," was Lenin so wrong when in *What is to be done?* (1902) he employed the same argument to underpin his demand for a strong centralised organisation? The class origin of the "professional revolutionary" was left obscure by a terminology which had become "Marxist," though the underlying logic went back to *Narodnaya Volya* and the writings of Tkachev. Unwittingly, Plekhanov had prepared the way for one of the greatest surprises in history.

That at the outset of his long career he knew exactly what the argument was about, the reader can discover by looking up his second pamphlet against the Narodniki, *"Our Differences"* (pp. 122 ff. of the present Soviet edition). Here, set down in 1884, is the theme which present-day historians and sociologists have had such difficulty re-discovering:

> ...however, there was a feature that can be considered as common to all our revolutionary trends. This feature common to them all was faith in the possibility of our revolutionary intelligentsia having a powerful and decisive influence on the people. In our revolutionary calculations the intelligentsia played the role of a beneficent providence of the Russian people, a providence upon whose will it depended whether the wheel of history would turn in one way or the other.

Plekhanov condemned this attitude as contrary to Marxism, and devoted several hundred pages to demonstrating its incompatibility with the statutes of the First International. (The Second International was subsequently organised with his assistance, and largely reflected his viewpoint.)

By now, a Third International, this time founded by his rebellious pupil Lenin, has come and gone, and Plekhanov's collected writings are being published in Moscow, though with a disapproving preface and critical footnotes deploring his obtuseness. It almost looks as though his lengthy polemics against the "Russian Blanquists" have ceased to possess any but academic interest. Still, even at this late date, one can usefully reflect upon the occasional ambiguity of his own thinking. Consider for example this passage from his address to the first Congress of the newly-formed Socialist International (Paris, July 14–21, 1889):

> As long as our movement remains a movement of ideologists and student youth, it may perhaps be dangerous for the Tsar personally, but it will present no danger for Tsarism as a political system. In order to overthrow and finally destroy Tsarism, we must rely on a more revolutionary element than student youth, and this element, which exists in Russia, is the class of the proletarians, a class which is revolutionary by reason of its distressing economic situation, revolutionary in its very essence.

This sounds plausible enough until one remembers that the *Communist Manifesto* had likewise envisaged a revolution carried out by an immature proletariat in a backward country, so that Plekhanov here was appealing to the Marx of 1848, rather than to the mature theorist of the First International. And who are "we"? If "we" decide whether or not to rely on "the proletariat," are "we" not in fact manipulating the class struggle, instead of—as good Social-Democrats—simply expressing the interests of organised labour? Plekhanov might have replied that in backward Russia there was no alternative, but this circumstance underscores the difficulty of his position.

His justly famous pupil, then still a student, showed a few years later that he too had reflected on the role his predecessors had once played in history: in fact the history of the French Revolution:

> Why does the author say of the French "bourgeoisie" that it triumphed at the end of the last century over the nobility? Why is activity that consisted chiefly and almost exclusively of the actions of the intelligentsia, called bourgeois? (Lenin, "The Economic Content of Narodism," *Collected Works*, Moscow, 1960, vol. I, p. 361).

It is true that he goes on to complain about the Populist habit of idealising the Russian intelligentsia. ("If in France you seek for *interests* behind the activity of the government and the intelligentsia, why do you *not* seek them in holy

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Russia?") But the conclusion he drew, as we all know by now, was that the intellectuals must identify themselves with the proletariat. The resulting *tour de force* is Lenin's peculiar contribution to political science, and the world has not yet recovered from it. Neither has Marxism, which in consequence was turned upside down.

THE FINAL RESULT of this process can be studied in the bulky textbook recently published under the title *Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism*. Its almost 900 pages offer a fascinating survey of philosophy, history, and contemporary science as refracted through the idiosyncratic prism of the Soviet Communist élite: a viewpoint still recognisably related to that of Plekhanov, though wrenched out of the traditional Marxist context and adapted to the requirements of a ruling class in a backward country. From the opening section on *Weltanschauung* ("Universal Forms of the Existence of the Material World," etc.) to the synthesis of Communism and Soviet patriotism offered in the concluding chapter ("The Free Man in the Free Society"), the authors—who include a whole platoon of academicians—can be watched at the absorbing task of fashioning a suitable creed for the heirs of the revolution: a political élite ultimately stemming from Plekhanov's despised *raznochintsi*; still busy, after almost a century of internal struggles, justifying their existence to themselves, and to the people they control and are trying to mould in their image.

George Lichtheim

Young Turks, New Turks

The Emergence of Modern Turkey. By BERNARD LEWIS. *Oxford University Press* (issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs), 48s.

FOR FIVE HUNDRED years the Ottoman State was a force to be reckoned with in European politics. It was the successor both to the conquering power of early Islam and to the empire of Byzantium. First it was feared in Europe as a terrible menace to Christendom. Then, as it followed its predecessor's career of stagnation and decay, it became in turn the object of European expansion. In the 19th century Constantinople was largely dominated by the embassies and the traders of the great European nations.

Yet, though Europe was by this time copiously informed of Ottoman affairs, it is doubtful how much Europeans understood.

BERTOLT BRECHT

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METHUEN

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European residents had far more contact with Greeks or other Christian subjects of the Sultan than with Turks. The diplomats had official relations with more or less Europeanised Turks who spoke good French. Of the Turkish peasants and artisans, traders or army officers, they knew little. One reason for this was that Turks, as a distinct nation, hardly existed. Only when the multi-lingual empire of the Sultans had almost completed its disintegration did a Turkish nation emerge. When this process was completed in 1918, Constantinople lost much of its importance.

Between the wars, when Russia was absent and Germany was weak, the predominant European Powers, France and Britain, were much more interested in the Arab lands which had formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire, and which they had in effect partitioned between them. While the long love-affairs of the British and the French with the Arabs pursued their tragi-comic course of mutual frustration and estrangement, the Turks remained forgotten. There were, of course, individual Europeans who form an exception. But it remains true that European study of the Turks was extremely inadequate, and that the literature on the subject in European languages, and especially in English, has been very small. A general survey of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the Turkish Republic, based on Turkish as well as foreign sources, has long been needed. This Professor Bernard Lewis has at last provided.

Nearly half his book is devoted to the late Ottoman period. Two chapters then describe the history of the Republic, up to the establishment of the Democratic Party régime of Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes. The last third discusses the major problems of modern Turkish society—the growth of a Turkish nation, the organisation of political power, the relationship of Islam to culture, and the formation of élites. Professor Lewis' main concern is with the development and diffusion of ideas, but this does not mean that social, political, or administrative problems are overlooked. Those who wish to understand the place of Turkey in the modern world (which is of far more than local importance) now have an easily accessible source of information and enlightenment.

One of the most interesting problems in modern Turkish history is the relationship between intellectuals and army officers—or between the civil and military *intelligentsia*. The military profession had exceptionally high prestige in the old Turkey. In the early stages of modernisation special attention was paid to the army. Indeed the modernising Sultan Mahmud II, like Peter the Great of Russia, sought modernisation mainly because it was necessary to strengthen Turkey as a military power. Thus army officers were brought into contact with Western ways, and so became accessible to Western ideas, earlier and on a larger scale than other social groups.

The first political radicals were not army officers but civilians—writers and journalists, some of whom spent many years abroad. But army officers became aware of political problems. On the one hand radicalism appealed to their idealism, on the other hand their privileged position in the state and their sense of patriotic duty kept them loyal to the Sultan. It is not until 1908 that army officers, infected with political ideas and associated with civilian revolutionaries, appear in a subversive role. The alliance between military and civilian radicals appears again in the Revolution of Atatürk. But in both cases authoritarian government and the military virtues proved stronger than the demand for individual freedom and democratic institutions.

Kemal Atatürk was a social reformer, and, as Professor Lewis shows, he proclaimed a kind of rough and ready Populism, whose aim was not only to weld the Turks into a nation but also

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to make the backward peasants into equal citizens. Nationalism, patriotism, and social justice were felt to go together. Yet in the following quarter century, though much progress was made in the towns, the villages remained backward and the peasants miserably poor. Indeed it may be argued that the very scale of urban progress deepened the dangerous gap between townsmen and peasants. The advent of Menderes marked a certain reaction against these trends. The victory of the Democrats was not only a victory for political democracy and a success for private capitalism against *étatisme*: it also introduced a period of greater attention to agriculture and greater tolerance towards Islam. Menderes antagonised the urban secularist intelligentsia, a large part of which felt contempt for the peasants and was indifferent to their welfare. But not all Turkish peasants benefited from Menderes' policies, and his increasingly dictatorial methods increased the number of his enemies, turned the army against him and brought about his downfall. However, in the year since his fall, the alliance between the army and the progressive intelligentsia has more or less broken down. The problems of town and country, religion and secularism, militarism and liberty, are hardly nearer solution than they were in the time of the Young Turks.

The events of the years which have followed the termination of Professor Lewis's survey are deeply discouraging. These questions cannot, of course, be answered. But the best preparation for the surprises, disagreeable or otherwise, which the next years will bring, is to study and to ponder the historical record and interpretation so brilliantly explained and presented in this book.

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Novels

Key to the Door. By Alan Sillitoe. *W. H. Allen,* 18s.

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Daughter of Silence. By Morris West. *Heinemann,* 16s.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie. By Muriel Spark. *Macmillan,* 13s. 6d.

The British reading public is probably hungrier now than it has ever been for sheer information; a fact which complicates the novelist's task. (The position should not be confused with the 19th-century desire for *instruction*, a climate in which the novelist flourished.)

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One solution is suggested by Mr. Alan Sillitoe's new book, which is really not a novel at all, but a study of two periods of life: working-class childhood in Nottingham during the thirties, and National Service in Malaya after the war. It has a hero, who undergoes some nominal development, and various characters who love, quarrel, steal, find jobs, move house, and die, but they are all subordinate to some larger purpose; or rather, they all appear to be subordinate to some larger purpose, but at the end of 446 pages the purpose has not yet emerged. Only the observations remain.

The result is inevitably a disappointing book. Admittedly Mr. Sillitoe's descriptions are always solidly convincing, and at his best he is as capable of conjuring up physical objects as tangibly as Lawrence at *his* best, or as Orwell; his characters may not be flesh and blood, but his towns are always brick and iron:

> Agger came on the tips every morning—in time for the first loads at nine—pushing an old carriage-pram, an antique enormous model that may once have housed some spoon-fed Victorian baby and been pushed by a well-trimmed maid. There was no rubber on the wheels; all paint had long since blistered from its sides, and a makeshift piece of piping served for a handle. Another valued possession of Agger's was a real rake unearthed from a load of brick and tile tippings, an ornate brass-handled tool of the scraper's trade with which he always expected to pull up some treasure, good reaching under the muck for good, but which he used with relish whether it made him rich or not.

But one cannot continue indefinitely in this flat, leisurely style, and when Mr. Sillitoe tries to decorate his documentary, the metaphors tend to mix, the word-order stumbles, and the far-fetched adjectives pile up in a semantic log-jam. "Vera was confused, pinned on to the flat spirit-level of indecision," and "The dark forests of the mountains where lurked the dead blood of injured men," are more than pure information, but less than good writing.

In the same way, the hero's eventual assertion of his own personality fails to come off. He does it with a typical Sillitoe gesture, by refusing to shoot a Communist guerilla who has ambushed him—the rebellion of a man too anarchic to do anything for his beliefs, but also not to be shoved into doing anything against them. It is an exciting moment, but it comes too late: Brian Seaton has been part of the scenery too long to make a plausible actor. Indeed, in a sense the book never goes beyond scenery at all. I prefer the industrial to the tropical patches, myself, because they have more human and social relevance to them; but even they are like great slabs of raw material, clumsily stacked together waiting for someone to make something of them, rather than a finished product.

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THE NOVEL OF PLACE is a variant of the general class of informative novels, and a good deal of Mr. Francis King's success has obviously come from his ability to awaken curiosity in some, and nostalgia in others, by the settings which his British Council posts have provided for him. This time Japan has come under his scrutiny, forming a much sadder and harsher picture than the Athens of *The Firewalkers* or the Florence of *The Dividing Stream*; it is not for nothing that Mr. King has put half his novel in the form of a diary kept by a university lecturer who longs to be back in Greece, and whose bad-tempered aversion to Japan is one of his stable topics:

> Japanese "politeness" has as little connection with consideration for others as Japanese cleanliness has with hygiene: both are ritualistic. This aphorism, as true and as untrue as any other aphorism, has been suggested to me by the events of this morning.

On top of this, hopeless misunderstandings between East and West provide some rather sour

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comedy, and some quite straightforward disaster, with a consistency which makes the whole book sound like a disguised plea for a new posting.

But it is also, like Mr. King's other books, an intelligent, witty, and satisfying work. He is a novelist of a very traditional pattern, sometimes even like a far more interesting and sensitive Maugham; although he uses some unobtrusive skill in his construction, and raises social and moral points by the way, his main concern is the creation of character for its own sake. His drink-sodden American journalist, his Japanese "new woman," his gangling, inadequate Australian missionary, are all details from a canvas rather than participants in a drama. What is most exciting about them is the accuracy with which various components (speech, mannerisms, opinions, virtues, and vices) have been fitted together to make a living organism, rather than the actions which the organism produces. Mr. King's plots are always plausible, not because they are uneventful (*The Custom House* includes one attempted and one successful murder) but because the events are so obviously subordinate in importance to the characters; this kind of sleight-of-hand is ignored by novelists who are so eager to unroll a significant pattern of action that they forget to make the actors credible.

I HAD ALWAYS thought *The Devil's Advocate* an amazingly over-rated book, and was therefore smugly pleased at the note of *diminuendo* in some reviews of *Daughter of Silence*. Mr. West is obviously an experienced hand at unravelling a mysterious plot, but no amount of skill or suspense could redeem the essential banality of his writing. He will not let one opportunity slip by of inserting a worn-out epigram, a heavily redundant adjective, or a serial-story touch of hackneyed characterisation. In this novel, a Tuscan girl who has shot her mother's murderer, a young lawyer needing a brief to establish his independence, his bitchy wife, and his Voltairean father-in-law (one of those old men who is unfortunately not only described as brilliant, but also allowed to carry on some lamentably un-brilliant dialogue), an Australian psychiatrist, and an Italian painter, carry out their creaking antics in courtroom, library, and bed, in a heavily romanticised Tuscan countryside "spread in a multichrome of dark olives, green vineyards, brown fallow, and ripe corn shaken by the wind." Mr. West has the makings of a great copywriter.

He has been observant psychologically as well as scenically; when the lawyer has won his case,

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his father-in-law "threw his arm around Carlo and embraced him in the ardent fashion of the South," and the Australian winds up a long muse on Italian national characteristics with a sage dictum: "They were very human people...." There is also some fine repartee.

> "What else is there to regret, my dear, but the follies one is incapable of committing?"
> "Perhaps the consequences of those one has already committed."

and some tenderly lyrical banter:

> "It's the penalty of freedom, Peter, the tax we pay for being bachelors or artists. When the strolling players come to town, husbands keep a close eye on their wives.... You are still Scaramouche, chéri; I am still Pierrette, light in love and ready to seduce their sons to the altar. It is only when we are old and famous that they want to have us to dinner."

The ease with which this mush can draw good notices reaffirms my faith in the critic's mission; which is, largely, the rectification of the damage done by other critics.

The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie is the newest model off the astonishingly fertile Spark production-line, and rattles along as energetically as ever. Reading Mrs. Spark's work is like playing Grandmother's Footsteps with a genuine, sharp-witted, and side-splittingly funny grandmother; every now and again, out of the apparent dotty inconsequence, there flashes something of such terrifying accuracy that it freezes the reader in his tracks. This very short study of an unconventional Edinburgh schoolteacher and her six favourite pupils has neither the compassion of *The Bachelors*, nor the macabre brilliance of *Memento Mori*, but it is extremely funny, and finally, perhaps, serious as well. Miss Brodie is eventually dismissed, nominally for her politics (she is an admirer of Mussolini) but in fact for her refusal to accept traditional methods either of teaching or of treating her fellow-teachers. She is destroyed, not merely by intervention from above, but because she is betrayed by one of her favourite pupils, the "Brodie Set" to whom she is devoting her prime. Those who live for others are usually less unselfish than is supposed, and also meet with less understanding and gratitude than they expect—that, I imagine, is Mrs. Spark's basic theme. But even if I am wildly wrong, I would recommend the book for its helter-skelter humour alone.

Francis Hope

The Miniature and the Deluge

The Fox in the Attic. By RICHARD HUGHES. *Chatto & Windus*, 18s.

Pantaloon. By PHILIP TOYNBEE. *Chatto & Windus*, 18s.

NO TWO BOOKS could be more different than these in some ways, yet in others they have qualities in common. They are both first volumes—in Mr. Hughes' case, of a trilogy, in Mr. Toynbee's, with characteristic blurredness, of "a series." They are both concerned with the 'thirties—Mr. Hughes' novel very precisely so, Mr. Toynbee's more diffusely. Finally, they are both "modern." By this I mean that the awareness of the contemporary material of the fiction is felt by the writer so urgently to be unprecedented, that he invents what would be called to-day an "experimental" form. So strange a thing is contemporaneity that the "modernness" of these two books makes them seem dated. The modern has ceased to be contemporary, because we are living, in fiction and poetry, in a period of reaction.

Mr. Hughes' novel is deliberately planned, structured work. So much so that it is difficult to say anything helpful about it at the moment. What Mr. Hughes has given us here produces the same sort of uncertainty as we would feel if we were presented with a third of a symphony: moreover, a symphony of the kind which is evidently planned as a single extended movement. The first theme is the Welsh and English country-and-town life of comfortably situated people with liberal-conservative views. It is a Forsterish world in which a problem of conscience arises when Mary, the wife of Gilbert, the liberal M.P., settles the sister of her housekeeper and her husband, who is dying of tuberculosis, in an unsalubrious 18th-century folly called "the hermitage," because her husband, the M.P., had argued that they should not be put in one of the small houses reserved for his own employees. "Couldn't Mary see it would be morally wrong to give strangers a Mellton cottage over Mellton heads?"

The second and perhaps major theme concerns the Ludendorff-Hitler conspiracy of the beer cellar in the early 1920s. Mr. Hughes "creates" the characters of Hitler and some of his colleagues as though they were fictitious in the way that his unhistoric characters are. He connects his themes, and his characters, by fitting them on to the chart of a theory about the relationship of subjective personality to the community. Every "I," he thinks, needs to identify with a communal "we," opposed to an

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enemy, "they." When contemporary history fails to provide such a schema into which the individual can fit himself, then there is a state of affairs in which certain individuals are liable to become locked in their own subjectivity and to blow off—volcano-like. Hitler he sees as a character catastrophically isolated within his own ego, and therefore doomed to volcanic eruption. One guesses that when the whole novel is unfolded it will provide a pattern in which all his characters will be revealed according to their degrees of subjectivity, communal belonging, and communal frustration.

A less theoretic link is provided by Augustine, one of the *Engländer* who travels in Germany and finds himself in an extremely nationalistic reactionary German aristocratic family.

THE SCALE of Mr. Hughes' attempt reminds one of other things—Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and —especially—Hermann Broch's novel *The Sleepwalkers*, whose theme connecting characters is a thesis about the relation of modern architecture to life. These parallels make one a bit nervous. One wonders whether Mr. Hughes is not attempting to do something essentially Teutonic or Slavonic when really his gifts are those of a painter of landscapes and interiors. The German life he describes is of the kind which if it convinces does so because it seems so incredible that one reflects it must be possible —how else could Hitler and Ludendorff have happened? The real trouble is that Mr. Hughes' Germans and castle scenes seem only there, as it were, when Mr. Hughes is controlling them. Look round a corner of the Munich of 1923 and one might stumble into the Berlin of Mr. Issyvoo. But there are no corners. Hitler was in Munich in 1923, but so were Thomas, Klaus, and Erika Mann. Such people seem rigidly excluded from the intensely concentrated and concretised settings of Mr. Hughes. To think about the world of Thomas Mann's marvellous story, *Early Sorrow*, as happening contemporaneously with *The Fox in the Attic*, seems almost disloyal to Mr. Hughes' intensive build-up. On the other hand the Welsh and English scenes are brilliantly, surely, eloquently described and as full of air and implications of life beyond their particulars, as the German ones are lacking in these.

What one misses in Mr. Hughes—so far—is something surely required for a contemporary historic fiction—the sense of history as the deluge carrying not just these characters but all their contemporaries along with them (one feels this deluge in *The Waste Land*). It is what I miss in the hard-work-in-hard-times novels of R. C. Hutchinson.

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THERE IS PLENTY of the deluge in Mr. Toynbee's poem-novel, all of whose faults are the exact opposites of those of Mr. Hughes. I shall go on to say how much I like Mr. Toynbee's book, but first I shall try to forestall objections to it, by taking this bull by the horns, outrageous by critical standards. The fundamental lack of planning is demonstrated by the device on which the whole work hangs together. For some reason beyond my comprehension, Mr. Toynbee wishes his narrator to be an octogenarian who is also a young man during the 1930s. To establish this, he casually mentions in the opening lines that Olaf, the totally arbitrary Norwegian (?) youth (?) to whom this ancient mariner addresses his recital is a student (?) of the class of 1998. However it is a 1998 in which apparently nothing has changed. One can be grateful that there are no spaceships, but it does seem faintly surprising that Mr. Toynbee should not have reflected that the consciousness of 1998 would, in the circumstances, condition these memories. The device is arbitrary for the sake perhaps of the art, but applied totally without art.

SO WHAT IS *Pantaloon*? It is really, I suggest, a rag-bag of memories and reflections held together by a character strenuously repudiating the idea that he is Philip Toynbee. Perhaps something is after all gained by Mr. Toynbee's making his hero an octogenarian, because considering how much the whole consciousness of the book is autobiographically tinged, he does somehow succeed in being Philip Toynbeeish without being Philip Toynbee. To continue with my negative reservations: there is a prose passage on page 129 imitating Rimbaud, which in these post-Lady Chatterley days I can without offence to critical language (considering all the critics who gave evidence) only describe as balls-aching. But the book is full of surprises: and one is that the influence of Auden, and, to a lesser extent, that of Eliot, has been thoroughly absorbed and gives the poetic imagery vivacity.

I have said so much *against* the book because these kind of criticisms have to be faced. The faults they refer to stick out a mile. But I entreat the reader to disregard them, and to read this book from beginning to end, overcoming all the protests which will make him, from time to time, want to throw it out of the window. For poets, it will come as something of a revelation; for it may well be the beginning of a break-through from the dreary academicism into which poetry has sunk in the day of the triumph of those Wagnerian dwarfs of criticism who are responsible for works such as the recent Pelican volume of essays on modern literature.

To list some of the virtues of Mr. Toynbee's narration: the study of the relationship of the narrator with his mother is a triumph. The burlesque account of the school days of a boy heavily disguised as having Fascist tendencies (and quite reminiscent of Esmond Romilly) is wonderfully funny. There are extremely beautiful stretches resembling grandiose set-pieces. For the reader-to-be-converted to this novel (of which I confess that I am already an addict) I recommend the passages on p. 68 in which the narrator recalls how when a boy he used often to look at the portrait of a boy who was a seventeenth century ancestor:

Ambiguous relationship
Depending on I never knew what chance of
mood or weather.
Sometimes I could master and bully him,
Bring him close to tears or dissolution.
The pretty spoiled face was about to crumple
on the canvas,
The blue eyes to be filled, to spill and wash the
paint away.
And I would boast to him of my mobility,
Skipping on the floor before him,
Running to the window or the door,
His eyes were fixed forever on a sullen ward-
robe;
His legs, though they stood so easily, could
never move him;
While I could run on the lawns and jump the
hedges;
Gallop and swim and swing into the beech-
leaves.

This poem has the exhilaration of memory making remote discoveries which it transforms into present inventions: memory that fills the reader with delighting envy, and which is certainly "life-enhancing" because it radiates in every direction, makes one realise that every life has an infinitude of past-ness crammed into a present moment of illumination. Not the least exciting thing is the way in which Mr. Toynbee gains in mastery over his medium, so that, after a time of doubting, the reader must admit that not only is the free verse justified, but it can attain to considerable poetry. The narrator is justified in calling himself a poet. In the last fifty pages, even the awkward technique of fitting in prose passages seems justified. Finally this book is funnier than any poetry since the Auden of *The Orators*.

Stephen Spender

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FROM THE OTHER SHORE

The Stormy Life of Ilya Ehrenburg

THE CELEBRATIONS of Ilya Ehrenburg's 70th birthday, during which he received the Second Order of Lenin and observed how happy he was to be a Soviet Socialist writer and how proud to be a Jew, prompt some reflections about this oddly enigmatic figure on the literary scene. For there is no doubt that he is an enigma. It is hard to understand how a writer like himself, who in his Russian-Parisian days had been one of the most brilliant satirists of the 'twenties, could ever have turned out the sad propaganda work represented by so many of his later novels. This puzzle is wrapped up in the greater mystery of Ehrenburg's whole charmed life in the Soviet Union. Since the death of Boris Pasternak, he is almost the only survivor of the Russian-Jewish literary intelligentsia whose roots go back to pre-revolutionary, bourgeois Czarist-Russian life. More than that, there is the puzzle how Ehrenburg, almost alone among the members of the Soviet wartime "Jewish anti-Fascist Committee," survived Stalin's campaign of 1948–53 against "rootless cosmopolitans" (when in the words of the Soviet novelist Abram Tertz, "anti-semitism was implemented in the name of internationalism"). For surely, no one fitted the description "cosmopolitan intellectual" better than Ehrenburg, who was of bourgeois origin, Jewish, who had lived almost half his adult life in the West, and had during those years not held back in satirising Soviet life and institutions. Yet, while others fell, Ehrenburg came through this dark period in Soviet life unscathed. In recent remarks, he himself has attributed survival not to his greater strength or prudence, but to the fact that "there are historic periods when human fate resembles not a game of chess played according to rules but a lottery," the implication being that he was simply lucky. But a closer look at his career shows that there was rather more to it than that.

RECENTLY, NEW LIGHT HAS BEEN SHED on Ehrenburg's early life and outlook from three different directions. In Moscow, the literary periodical *Novy Mir* has published the first two volumes of Ehrenburg's autobiography. In his preface, Ehrenburg has promised the reader "frankness." The opening sections which takes Ehrenburg from his birth in 1891 to the year 1917, when he returned to Russia after nine years in Paris, and where he describes his bourgeois childhood and his youth in Montparnasse in the company of Modigliani and Picasso, are in fact frank enough. In the subsequent part, dealing with his experiences in Russia from 1917 to 1921, when he left again for Paris, he is, however, disappointingly less candid, wrapping up his experiences in lofty generalisations. This lends added importance to another event concerning Ehrenburg's past, the re-issue of an English translation of his early novel, *The Stormy Life of Lasik Roitschwantz*, previously out of print, an extravagant satire in which Ehrenburg had his fun with Soviet life as seen through the sad eyes of a little Jewish tailor.[1] For Ehrenburg, the re-publication of this uproarious novel was clearly frankness carried much too far—much further than he intended to go in his autobiography. His angry letters to British and American newspapers, protesting against infringement of copyright (as though he did not know the Soviet authorities took no heed of this right) show that as far as his past is concerned, it is his view that he himself should decide what is to be censored or not. Perhaps this is understandable, but his reaction also makes it all the more interesting for a Western reader to look again at his early novel which, through its outlook, sheds an additional clear light not only on Ehrenburg's past, but also on his present position.

One can also make another point. It is to be regretted that Ehrenburg has not seen fit to follow Pasternak's example of agreeing to the publication abroad of work not permitted in the Soviet Union, for, after all, the re-issue of *Roitschwantz* can only add to his credit. Indeed, this novel which he wrote in Paris in 1927 is so knife-sharp in its humour, so witty a skit on a modern Jewish Candide, that it shows what a satirist of our time has been lost somewhere in his career. It is a pity that the book cannot be republished in Moscow; the young Soviet Russians should see Ehrenburg in this clearer light.

It would, at any rate, give them the flavour of that brand of self-irony and tragi-comic humour which flourished among the Jews of the Russian Pale and has been cherished by many of their descendants. The scene of his satire is Europe of the nineteen-twenties. His hero Roitschwantz is a preposterous little tailor from the Russian provincial town of Homel, who is pushed around by all state authorities and other authorities, while he lectures them in parables concerning what the saintly Zadik of Berditchev said or the Talmudic disputation whether an egg laid within the time of the Sabbath is clean or unclean. A critic has compared Roitschwantz with Chaplin: just as the Chaplin figure of silent films responded to situations with gloriously inappropriate grand gestures, so Roitschwantz is an obsessive talker who with surrealist logic is always splitting the wrong Talmudic hair. While the joke is sometimes run to death, it enables Ehrenburg to hit out at one pretension after the other, and especially at the shams of life in the Soviet Union where the events of the first half of the book take place.

THE FUN, IN FACT, is at its best in these opening scenes, where Ehrenburg shows the Jews of Homel as a preposterous rabble, running round in circles

[1] *The Stormy Life of Lasik Roitschwantz*. By ILYA EHRENBURG. (Translated by Leonid Borochowicz and Gertrude Flor; Polyglot Library, New York.)

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in now trying to conform to a godless and classless society, just as Jews have had to adapt themselves to various other régimes in the past. There is Homel itself, which, regardless of the glorious achievements of Soviet society, "does not yet have any decent plumbing." There is the synagogue Cantor's daughter, Fenichka Hershanovich, who at the workers' club *"Red Awakening"* sings international revolutionary songs, while her father still secretly circumcises little Jewish boys, at three roubles apiece. There is the baker Levka who, to show godless zeal, shouts *"Down with rotten Sabbath! Long live, let us say, Monday!"* And finally, always gloriously absurd, there is Lasik Roitschwantz himself—the name means "Red-tail," with a bawdy connotation—protesting to authority that he could easily have called himself Spartacus Rosaluxemburgsky, but had no need to do so since the operative syllable in his already existing name was *"Red."*

In spite of frantic efforts to conform, Lasik is arrested for a mere sigh at the wrong time and place, namely, as he studies the latest Communist billboard proclamation. With his imprisonment and release, Lasik's Odyssey begins. Studying to become a Party candidate, he finds the three-decker names of the obligatory Chinese revolutionary heroes (not to speak of the pink traitors) more difficult to master than the Cabbala. In Kiev, he is married to a Russian giantess who divorces him officially within the hour to obtain his pitiful room and possessions. Irrepressible, he bobs up in Moscow as an "inexorable critic," a famous member of the "Literary Club," disturbing evenings devoted to the dances of the minorities or a lecture about the sexual problem by embarking on either double-talk about the Marxist superstructure or reflections on Passover. His apotheosis comes when as manager of a rabbit farm he reports the continuous statistical multiplication of its population, even though the original pair of breeding rabbits never lived.

His surrealist adventures, always ending in disaster, next take Lasik abroad. He escapes into Poland where he is arrested as a Red spy. In Berlin he finds himself a film extra. In Rome, he has a dream of Jesus as only another poor Jewish artisan like himself. In Paris, he is drawn into grotesque anti-Soviet plots among White Russians; following this, he becomes under the name of "Chvance" a well-known Bohemian celebrity at the *Rotonde*, pointed out to visiting Americans. He next crosses to London to seek payment for conversion to Christianity, but is deported by Scotland Yard to Palestine. On the street bourse in Tel Aviv he is shocked to find the Holy Tongue used in share-deals and is beaten up for voicing indignation. Arriving wearily in Jerusalem, he finds that owing to the presence of Mandatory police, even the Wailing Wall is no place to loiter at, and so he expires near the grave of Mother Rachel, with Ehrenburg concluding, "Rest in peace, poor Roitschwantz, you will not dream any longer of justice on a piece of sausage," before penning his author's date-line: *"Written in Paris, April–October 1927."*

RE-READ TO-DAY, Roitschwantz is rather like one of those outstanding silent films of that era whose brilliant technique comes through in spite of dated material. Perhaps Lasik's chase through the countries of the West is too close to farce, but it is the Soviet Russian scenes which are significant, for they bring out Ehrenburg's strikingly ambivalent outlook towards Communism at that time. The novel expresses his love for Russia, his regard for social progress, but equally his deep scepticism about the whole idea that men could be transformed by mere State institutions; and there is his utter disbelief in all violence. There is also one passage which may be the most revealing Ehrenburg ever wrote. Lasik is in a Soviet Russian train, talking to a fellow traveller, and through this conversation Ehrenburg expresses all his doubts about "social engineering." The talk is that a certain doctor has been shot through a mistake in his identity, and, with a parable about a Jewish saint who told God that the life of even one old man was too high a price for the happiness of mankind, Lasik holds forth. It is worth giving the passage in full:

> Naturally, if that doctor were as insignificant an animal as, for instance, Lasik Roitschwantz, he should lie down in a waiting grave in the first place. For when these fanatics and hundred-percenters walk down the street, there is nothing for an ordinary person to do but die politely—with an exalted look on his face. That's the Chinese multiplication table, and everybody knows it. But neither you nor I are somebody in world history. We are merely miserable fellow travellers in one of many hard train compartments. We may ask ourselves: Why did that anonymous doctor have to pay so dearly for the "noble phase"? Perhaps this doctor had children, too? Maybe he would have preferred to live another twenty-five years? I never saw him, but I know one thing: he was certainly a plain man, but surely not some banknote that one pushes under a ticket window. Then, tell me, why do you keep drinking your tea so unconcernedly, and do not want to understand such a simple tragedy. You think that when they kill a man and stamp a wailing seal on him, as though he were not a real corpse, but rather the multiplication table of a wonderful future, that then blood ceases to be blood? I would prefer to be down together with that finished-off doctor than to listen to such soulless multiplication.

The passage, written as it was many years before Stalin's purges and such events as the faked "doctors' plot," has a prophetic ring. One can see why Ehrenburg does not want such passages republished; they throw light on a certain tragedy in his career and on questions which, one hopes, he will eventually answer in his autobiography.

WHAT do we learn about him so far through this work? Concerning his youth, a fair amount—the opening instalments in *Novy Mir* are candid enough, though even here one can see

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political guidance. Ehrenburg was born in 1891 in Kiev, but soon moved to Moscow. Like his contemporary, Pasternak, he came of a Jewish upper-middle-class family—his father was director of a brewery. *Roitschwantz* makes it quite clear that he retained a most intimate knowledge of Jewish life, as does his work for the "Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee" in World War II. However, even as a schoolboy he was soon also drawn into underground revolutionary activity. In 1907, at the age of 17, he was arrested together with ten other schoolboys (among whom was Nikolai Bukharin, though Ehrenburg does not say so). On release he broke parole and for a short time lived an underground existence in various Russian cities, constantly changing his address: one can see some of these youthful experiences reflected in the constant chase in *Roitschwantz*. The attempt was not very successful. Ehrenburg recounts how, driven by despair, he gave himself up to the police. The Tsarist police sergeant laughed at him—and told him to go home: his father had already paid 500 roubles bail for him. The consequence was that in December 1908, still just under 18, Ehrenburg left Moscow for Paris, with an allowance from his father of 50 roubles a month (a comfortable income at the time).

In Paris, though he once met Lenin, Ehrenburg soon dropped politics. He evidently assimilated himself to French art and letters and the stimulating life of Montparnasse with exceptional rapidity. He was equally at home at the Balmonts' salon as at the *Rotonde*; with Mallarmé as ideal, he himself wrote (and published) a volume of Russian poems called *"Dandelion."* Modigliani, already a tragic figure, became his close friend; he also had the fortune to see a good deal of Picasso, then in his cubist period. (Writing to-day, Ehrenburg tries to excuse Picasso's nonconformity to the Soviet canons of art by stressing his social conscience; but this afterthought can be disregarded.)

Then came August 1914—a thunderclap. Unable to return home, Ehrenburg rushed like many other Parisian Russians to join the French forces, but was rejected on health grounds. At the age of 23 Ehrenburg was on his own, for the first time without an allowance from his father. After passing through some grim industrial jobs, he became a war correspondent attached to headquarters of the British Expeditionary Force. But he also caught a whiff of the smell of the trenches; he saw the contending armies as vast, mindless machines grinding towards death. (There is no need to doubt his artist's sensitivity: his horror of war and pessimism about the prospects of mankind are well expressed in his post-first-war novel, *Julio Jurenito*.) A break from the spell came for Ehrenburg in 1917 with news of the fall of the Tsarist monarchy. Homesickness overtook him. As for other Russian émigrés, this was for him a signal to return home; and, via England, Norway, and Finland, Ehrenburg and a party arrived in Russia in July 1917, not long after Lenin's first and unsuccessful attempt to seize power.

Here the first volume of Ehrenburg's story ends, and it is as good a *Bildungsroman* as any.[2] He was now twenty-six, and had been away for nine formative years. In fact, from all the evidence, the elements which shaped his outlook were now definite and clear. There were both his Russian and his Jewish background; there was his rather sketchy association with the revolutionaries; and there was the profound schooling in Western literature and art which he absorbed in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Paris. The indications are, indeed, that Ehrenburg had already acquired his particular and unmistakable *esprit* as writer during this early Parisian phase and later in life added little to it. The real theme of his life is what he did with this heritage in his attempt simultaneously to-be-and-not-to-be a Communist writer. Indeed, were Ehrenburg to recount this with true frankness, the subsequent volumes of his autobiography could become a uniquely important human document.

Unfortunately, the further instalments in *Novy Mir* published so far hold out no such clear promise. They cover his short stay in Moscow during his period in Russia in 1917–21, and so raise some crucial questions. Why, apart from a few brief months, did Ehrenburg refuse to live in Soviet Russia until he was fifty (in fact, right up to the time in World War II when Hitler was about to attack the Soviet Union and it could be argued that Ehrenburg, who was still in German-occupied Paris, had nowhere else to go)? What was it in his glimpses of early Soviet life that so repelled him? In his second volume Ehrenburg leaves these questions largely unanswered. True, he hints repeatedly that from the start he found Soviet censorship and the suppression of the individual and the arts unpalatable, but these hints are so wrapped up in generalisations of hindsight and the narrative moves so constantly from past to present that as if by design the reader is left with no clear picture of the young Ehrenburg.

Thus, for example, Ehrenburg quotes Gorki's remark that his early attitude towards Lenin was not what later he would have liked it to have been, and adds conveniently that this applied also to his own case. Elsewhere he refers in moving and melancholy terms to his friendship with the Russian poetess Tsvetaeva. (Towards her memory he clearly feels a sense of guilt, for he describes how much later, in 1941, she called on him in Moscow, but there was no longer any sense of contact, and shortly after he heard of her suicide.) During the earlier phase of their friendship, says Ehrenburg, he and Tsvetaeva worked as close collaborators for a periodical of Russian verse, but he does not stress the fact that this must have been an international periodical published in three languages in 1922 in Berlin. Leaping forward in time, he dwells on the sad deaths, by suicide or execution, of his early literary friends such as Mayakovsky, Meyerhold, Mandelshtam, Babel, and others, but slides over

[2] Just published in English as *People and Life* (translated by Anna Bostock and Yvonne Kapp, MacGibbon & Kee, 21s).

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the point that while Stalin's purges were in progress, he himself was living mainly in Paris. All in all, in referring to his early doubts about the Soviet attitude to the arts, he evades the question how far these doubts embraced the whole Communist philosophy. In short, it would need some detective work to find out what Ehrenburg actually did during 1917–21.

IN POINT OF FACT, Ehrenburg's contact with Soviet rule was brief, perhaps as brief as he could make it: much the greater part of his Russian stay during the Civil War years 1917–21 was spent in "White" territory. He evidently made first for Yalta, in the Crimea, then occupied by the counter-revolutionary forces of General Wrangel, for the personal reason that his mother and other relatives were staying in the vicinity. His close friend during that time was Ossip Mandelshtam, a sensitive Russian-Jewish poet who later perished in one of Stalin's camps in 1938—as Ehrenburg sorrowfully puts it, "exiled 10,000 km. from his home." It was not surprising that the atmosphere at Wrangel's degenerating headquarters, where drunken Cossacks roamed the streets looking for "Jews and Communists," gradually became impossible for Ehrenburg and Mandelshtam. In the spring of 1920 they departed by sea for the—then—independent Menshevik republic of Georgia, which had a Bolshevik representative as a consul. This personage, says Ehrenburg, asked him to be a diplomatic courier, and in this way he, his wife, and Mandelshtam, obtained coveted railway tickets and so arrived in Moscow in August 1920.

From this point on, Ehrenburg's narrative becomes even less precise and continuous. Soon after arrival he was, in fact, arrested by the *Cheka*, forerunner of the *GPU*, thrown into the dreaded Lubianka prison and asked to *disprove* the charge that he was an agent of General Wrangel. For some days he was in danger of joining the many victims shot at the time, but in retrospect Ehrenburg makes rather light of this. What he claims mainly to remember is that his *Cheka* interrogator talked to him about French art and literature while even the *Cheka* policemen who arrested him were interested in Cubism and at his request went to reassure his wife and to talk to her about art, too. After some days Ehrenburg found himself without explanation released from Lubianka. In the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion in Moscow he must have felt pretty insecure, but again he now says little about this. Instead, he tells how during his stay in Moscow he realised that he was no poet and so decided to write a novel about his whole epoch.

Next, without preliminaries, he describes how he was ordered to the Foreign Office to fill in an application for an exit visa, where, as his reason, he put down his desire to write a novel. This resulted in another call to *Cheka* headquarters, this time to see its feared deputy-chief, Menzhinsky. According to Ehrenburg, Menzhinsky also talked to him about Paris and life at the *Rotonde*, while he himself confessed to his doubts about Bolshevism and suggested that he could write his intended novel better from abroad. Menzhinsky appeared convinced; and so, says Ehrenburg, in the spring of 1921, accompanied by his wife, he left Moscow again "as one of the first Soviet citizens to go abroad on a Soviet passport."

NO DOUBT A FORTUNATE ESCAPE, but as Ehrenburg tells the story, it is simply not plausible. Not that the *Cheka* conversations on art might not have taken place in those strange days of 1921, but they are certainly not the whole story. One can make a number of guesses. Ehrenburg's brief stay under Soviet rule suggests that he was seeking to get away as fast as he could; and that in seeking a visa he got to Menzhinsky himself indicates that he was waging a battle royal for his passport. That he was permitted to go abroad only a few months after being nearly shot by the *Cheka* was unusual enough. That he could leave on an official Soviet passport made him one of the very rare, favoured few. That his wife could depart with him was also most unusual—the Bolsheviks made it almost a rule that wives stayed as "hostages." And that Ehrenburg from that time on retained his official Soviet passport while living abroad for not less than twenty years, coming and going, even though as writer he satirised the Soviet Union—this made his case unique.

Had Ehrenburg then struck some special bargain with the Soviet authorities? This may sound improbable, yet the odd thing is that Ehrenburg almost hints at this himself. He recounts how, in Moscow, Menzhinsky said to him: "Well, we'll let you out but what the French will do I don't know." Yet why should the French have worried about Ehrenburg at a time when they were taking in Russian refugees right and left? But true enough, on arrival Ehrenburg was temporarily deported from France; and he himself here sees fit to relate how the French police official carrying out the order said to him: "France is the freest country in the world, so that if the French authorities decide to expel you, they must have a reason."

What Ehrenburg means to convey by these exchanges must remain surmise. However, the fact is that at the point where he ends his second autobiographical volume, that is, after not more than eight months in the Soviet Union, he was back in the West . . . and for the next twenty years he remained a resident in the West, visiting his native country only for shorter or longer stays.

The next puzzle is what went on in Ehrenburg's mind during all these years. True, he wrote. His long-promised revolutionary novel, *Julio Jurenito*, was published in 1922 in Berlin. It turned out to be a huge political satire with an international setting. Its hero is a Mexican revolutionary, the "Master" Jurenito, who at the time of the first World War has invented the ultimate weapon. Attended by a polyglot set of disciples (among whom Ehrenburg includes himself) the "Master" travels through many countries, philosophising and arguing, until he meets the death he seeks by being killed in Moscow, the capital of the peasants

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and workers. The pattern of the novel was hectically picaresque. It enabled Ehrenburg to laugh at national stupidities, to reflect on the horrors of world war, to satirise Western bourgeois society and, in the last chapter, to hit out equally at Soviet pretensions and the Soviet police system. It was *Julio Jurenito* which first gave Ehrenburg his reputation in the West. A few years later he enhanced it when he published *Roitschwantz*. In form, the new novel was much the same international satire all over again, the same mirror held up to the age. Only this time the satire was sharper and neater and the novel also gains because the chief character is this time no Mexican but one of Russia's wandering Jews—Ehrenburg was here writing most directly from his own standpoint.

THE THIRD VOLUME of Ehrenburg's memoirs covers the period from the middle of 1921 to the end of 1926. Having finished his novel *Julio Jurenito* in Belgium (where he had permission to stay for one month only), Ehrenburg moved to Berlin where he remained for two years. Then, by the end of 1923, after a short visit to Prague, he returned to Moscow but left the Soviet Union again in May, 1924. He then went to Italy, stayed over a year in Paris, and paid another literary visit to the Soviet Union in 1926.

Around that time one comes to a dividing line in Ehrenburg's life. After *Roitschwantz*, which he wrote when thirty-six, he engaged in no more direct criticism of life in his homeland and also, by and large, produced no further works of real literary value. This puzzling change needs some explanation. Was it perhaps that like some other writers deeply affected by the first World War, Ehrenburg had grown prematurely weary and come up against a literary blockage? Of course his output went on. There was his 1st Five-Year Plan novel, *The Second Day*, with its theme that a Soviet intellectual who sets his conscience above "the will of the collective" must meet a bad end—a sort of curious anti-Roitschwantz theme. Or one could mention his life of Kreuger, his skit on "The Life of Automobiles," his volume on Babeuf, his continuous flow of pamphlets and articles. But some spark had gone. Ehrenburg himself must have known that for an intellectual of his exceptional background, all this output was mere ephemeral journalism—at best bright journalism. Even his later best-seller, *The Fall of Paris*, was mere reportage which would have been forgotten in three months had it not been made part of official Communist literature. One may here hazard a guess. Was it because Ehrenburg now felt that he could not become "a major writer" but only "a Communist major writer" that he gradually yielded to the latter temptation? This may be wrong: but it would be interesting if he himself could help to clear up this point.

This is linked with the other puzzle of how Ehrenburg, in spite of his Soviet citizenship and contributions to Soviet periodicals, was able to stay on in Paris without ever being recalled for good, since under Stalin this privilege of his was practically unique. The later 'thirties were a grim time. In Spain, the Civil War was being waged, and in Russia, Stalin's purges ground on relentlessly, with successive generations of Soviet intellectuals going to their deaths (especially Jewish intellectuals and, above all, those with foreign associations). Yet during all this time, Ehrenburg was able to travel freely across Europe as a Soviet citizen and to visit Moscow and depart again as if this atmosphere of fear did not concern him. Had he his own dispensation direct from Stalin? One might almost have thought so. He stayed put even on the outbreak of World War II. During the phase of the Nazi-Soviet pact, he wrote no attacks on Nazism. Protected by his Soviet citizenship when others fled, he watched Hitler's soldiers march into Paris, while *Pravda* spoke of the fall of France as "a great triumph for the German armies." In his own reports about the fall of Paris to the Soviet journal *Ogonek* ("Little Flame") the German troops were hardly mentioned. And then, in the summer of 1941, shortly before Hitler's attack upon Russia, he was given the chance of his life. In company with other Russians, he travelled home via Germany—as if the story of the "sealed train" was enacted again. And within a short while Hitler had launched his attack and practically on the first day Ehrenburg was on the air on Moscow Radio, proclaiming that French workers were writing on the walls: "Hitler has started the war—Stalin will end it!"

FROM A LOOK at Ehrenburg's wartime speeches and writings, it is evident that this period of travail for Russia and Europe was for him actually one of fulfilment. In fact, for the first time he appeared as a spokesman really identified in public eyes with the Soviet state apparatus. Everything was suddenly simple. The enemy of Communism was also the enemy of Mother Russia, the enemy of France and of all that was civilised, and the diabolical foe of all Jews. As a radio spokesman Ehrenburg called for "Death to the German Invaders!"; he could, almost for the first time, speak directly as a Jew without need of an *alter ego* like Roitschwantz. Even Stalin, who had executed so many early revolutionaries, was now the war hero of East and West. In *Pravda*, on the 14th August, 1941, Ehrenburg wrote: "I am Russian and a Russian writer, but Hitler has reminded me of something additional. My mother's name was Hannah. I am a Jew. I say this with pride. We are those whom Hitler hates most, and this hatred honours us...." He plainly flung himself into his journalistic task with a will. Through his radio speeches, in which he attacked not only Nazism but all German militarists down to their remotest ancestors in history, he was soon the Soviet propagandist best known in the West.

More than that, in Europe's convulsion under Hitler, it seemed as if antagonisms like that of Communism against Judaism were thrown to the winds. Ehrenburg had his mysterious asset of direct access to Stalin, but at the same time he was one of the directors of the "Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee." This official body, which in-

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cluded the famous actor Mikhoels and leading Yiddish writers like Fefer, Bergelson, and Markish, had been given the task of rallying international Jewish opinion to support Soviet Russia's efforts against Hitler. On its behalf Ehrenburg broadcast eloquent messages which for the first time since the Nazi-Soviet pact made Jews breathe again more easily. He was involved with the idea of post-war resettlement of Jewish refugees in the Crimea, with the aid of American-Jewish funds. On one documented occasion, he was a member of a Jewish delegation to the Soviet Foreign Ministry, which received the go-ahead signal for the idea. The members of this delegation were Mikhoels, the veteran Jewish Communist diplomat Lozovsky, the writers Fefer and Bergelson, and Ehrenburg himself.

The date of this publicised interview was July 10th, 1944. And only a few months later, Soviet policy in one of its sudden turns took on a sharp anti-Jewish tone from which it has never since really departed. The immediate reasons for the switch were evident. The danger was over; Hitler's empire was collapsing; as seen from Moscow, the Soviet Union was now engaged in a race with the West for the control of Germany. The "Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee" had served its purpose, and it was now the turn of Walter Ulbricht and the German Communist puppets to be brought to the fore. A first sign of this was that Ehrenburg, who as a newcomer in Moscow no doubt had many enemies, was sharply reprimanded. In March 1945, the leading Soviet theoretician Alexandrov directly attacked Ehrenburg in *Pravda*, for blurring the Communist distinction between "good and bad Germans," and—more ominously—dropped a hint about the undesirable "Judaising" of the Soviet press. There is evidence that Ehrenburg's first reaction was courageous. In arguments in the Soviet Writers' Union he denounced its President, Tikhonov, and the noted dramatist Vishnevsky for their anti-semitism. When on one occasion personal criticisms were flung at him, he silenced his accusers by quoting a letter of praise for his writing—from Stalin himself.

So far, so good. But 1947–48, when Soviet policy switched in a few months from support for the new state of Israel to the wooing of the Arab nationalists, the Jewish situation in Moscow suddenly became grave. Early in 1948, the Jewish actor Mikhoels, once Stalin's favourite, was killed on, as was rumoured, Beria's orders. Further rumours came of Jewish personages being arrested or suddenly disappearing. For the Moscow Jews, only three years after Hitler's downfall, the news of this purge was like a nightmare. There were desperate meetings and discussions.

And Ilya Ehrenburg?

To understand what Ehrenburg did, one has to realise that in politics as opposed to literature and art he had always been an "opportunist," which meant always guessing what the Party line would be two or three moves ahead. But on this grim occasion in Moscow he was caught, there was no escape, it was either/or—and Ehrenburg left no doubts about his choice. Was there perhaps even a pistol at his back? One does not know. But on the 26th October, 1948, in *Pravda* he published what can only be described as a stridently anti-Zionist article. He poured scorn on the "ludicrous and counter-revolutionary idea" that the Jews of different countries were in any way linked because of their history and religion. Only common Jewish persecution, Ehrenburg proclaimed, could have given rise to this vulgar error, and he commented with a feeble joke. If all men with *turned-up* noses were persecuted, no doubt they would come to feel certain ties, but would anyone in his senses therefore regard them as a people? Towards the state of Israel, which Moscow had supported at the U.N. only a year earlier, Ehrenburg reserved his special venom. Israel, he wrote, was the property and booty of "the Anglo-American millionaires"; it was a "laughable dwarf capitalist state" whose bourgeoisie ruthlessly exploited the workers for the sake of the almighty dollar. Israel was detested by Soviet Jews who regarded themselves as joyous citizens of a Socialist society which was marching in the vanguard of progressive mankind towards a radiant future.

IT WAS A FAR CRY from 1927 when Ehrenburg had let his hero Roitschwantz find his final resting place in Jerusalem. The special irony of it is this: during the war, the "Anti-Fascist Committee" was told to make particular efforts to mobilise the Palestine Jews in support of the Soviet effort. In 1943 a high-ranking Soviet delegation arrived in Jerusalem to take over an ambulance train donated by the Jewish Federation of Labour, the *Histadrut*, and bearing a message to the *Histadrut* from the "Anti-Fascist Committee" which said:

> We march in the direction set by the Soviet Maccabeans who fight in the anti-Hitler coalition. This battle unites us with you, Jews of the world, in links of friendship which will not grow less even when the war is over and fascism will have been wiped from this earth. We are united anew. . . .

The text of this remarkable document bore four signatures, those of Mikhoels, Fefer, Bergelson—and that of Ilya Ehrenburg.

But if Ehrenburg in 1948 turned against the Jews of Israel, who could look after themselves, that was a detail. He must have known that an anti-Jewish action by Stalin was in the wind. He knew also that whenever an attack was launched in *Pravda* against a "deviation," this was usually followed by a wave of arrests. When he therefore described international feelings of affinity among Jews as "counter-revolutionary," he must have known that he was echoing an official doctrine which might cost many Soviet Jews their liberty and lives.

Did Ehrenburg therefore write this article to save himself? When he had decided not to be a free writer but a Communist, when he returned in 1941 to Moscow, had these decisions been irrevocable steps towards his fate of becoming a hated figure in Jewish life? This may be so, yet the words he wrote cannot be expunged.

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One did not have to wait long for the expected blow. In 1949, Jewish intellectuals of various kinds, including prominent writers in Russian and Yiddish, actors and artists, were arrested by the secret police in scores. In 1952, the last year of Stalin's life, all the leading members of the war-time Anti-Fascist Committee except Ehrenburg were put into the dock in a secret trial, still not officially admitted. But the details which have leaked out are familiar. The very achievements of the prisoners were turned against them. The charge was one of "bourgeois cosmopolitanism" and consequent disloyalty to the Soviet fatherland; that is, the accused were now charged with those very same ties with Jews abroad which they had been told to forge during the war! For example, the scheme for resettling Jewish refugees in the Crimea, in whose discussion Ehrenburg had taken part, was now transformed into a "plot" to detach the Crimea from the Soviet Union. And the outcome was as in other such trials. According to the careful researches of the Congress for Jewish Culture, the period of Stalin's terror resulted in the imprisonment or death of 238 Jewish writers (including some of world fame); of 106 actors (mostly belonging to Jewish companies which were all dissolved); and of 19 musicians, and 87 painters and sculptors. A good many were executed; others vanished in camps. Of the 24 accused in the secret trial of 1952, only one survived, the famous elderly woman scientist Lina Stern. On being called "bitch" by the Minister of Security, Abakumov, she shouted back: "How dare you insult the only woman member of the Soviet Academy of Medicine! It's a disgrace for a socialist country to have a person like you as Minister and wearing a general's uniform!" Through this act of courage, she became the sole survivor.

And Ehrenburg, who alone seemed safe under Stalin's protection? Ehrenburg remained quiet for dear life. More than that, he returned payment. During the last years of Stalin's life he wrote a novel called *Storm*. The U.S. was now the enemy, and in *Storm* Ehrenburg described how American warmongers, together with crazed Hitlerites and Fascists, were plotting new war against the Soviet Union, only to be frustrated. It is worth quoting the concluding lines of the novel. They deal with a Moscow procession:

> As they passed in front of the mausoleum, Nina Georgievna looked at Stalin. He was smiling. Nina Georgievna smiled too, she smiled at the man who had known the old world, who had fought with Lenin, had been jailed more than once, and had taken upon his shoulders the heaviest burden: that of making the Soviet State strong, of leading the people through the storm and, now, of defending life, its warmth and its peace.
>
> For a moment the sun broke through the heavy mauve clouds.
>
> "Long live the standard-bearer of peace!"
>
> All eyes were on Stalin, and it flashed through Nina Georgievna's mind: the whole world is looking at him.

The best comment about what life under the dictatorship had done for Ilya Ehrenburg might be to compare this passage with that quoted from his novel, *Roitschwantz*, written twenty years earlier.

MEMORIES TO-DAY are short. Though for some of those who knew about him Ehrenburg was very much a disliked figure, the Communist international claque was strong enough (and so, of course, was the ordinary man's desire for peace) for Ehrenburg to travel abroad, to represent the Soviet Government at "Peace Congresses," and to shrug off questions about his former colleagues. For instance, in 1954 he declared publicly in London (and again during a journey to America): "Fefer, Bergelson, Markish? But I haven't been meeting these writers, and also know nothing about them." There was also a scene in 1954 at the Hotel Royal-Monceau in Paris, where the Stalin Peace Prize was being awarded to the French Deputy, Pierre Cot. Ehrenburg was smiling at some journalists, but as soon as he saw they were Jewish he shouted: "I have no time to waste with people like you!" and appealed to his French colleagues for protection. But the pose was not quite tenable. In 1955, when some of the survivors of Stalin's Jewish purge were being released, they told of stories circulating in the camps that the Jewish writers, before their execution, had bitterly attacked Ehrenburg. These reports remained unverified, and one's inclination is therefore not to consider them. However, the real point is that Ehrenburg's general attitude at the time should even have given rise to such stories. For this reason, too, the question of his attitude towards his Jewish fellow-writers was in 1956 once again analysed and discussed in such Western journals as the *Spectator* and *Le Monde*. Ehrenburg was, in fact, particularly unpopular in France. Twice he had been given refuge and been accepted in Paris as a free writer. That he should now return as literary ambassador of the Soviet state bureaucracy was too much. As *Le Figaro Littéraire* complained: "Whenever Moscow wants to improve cultural relations, it sends us this M. Ehrenburg whose opportunism is truly acrobatic: not long ago he praised Stalin fulsomely, but no sooner was the tyrant dead than he hastened to criticise him in a bad novel called *The Thaw*."

Now at last Ehrenburg was stung into reply. On the 26th August, 1957, he sent a letter to *Le Monde* the gist of which was as follows: (1) While the victims of Beria's arbitrary actions were of all Soviet nationalities, it was true that in 1949 they included several well-known Jewish writers who were his intimate friends. (2) Only when these were rehabilitated, years later, had he learned of their tragic death. (3) As for statements that they had allegedly attacked him, Ehrenburg, before their execution, he was shocked that *Le Monde* should publish insinuations based on alleged statements by people who were no longer alive to refute them.

To this, *Le Monde* icily replied: (1) As Ehrenburg knew, Beria's and *Stalin's* action of 1949 was

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not directed against Soviet citizens of all nationalities but specifically against prominent Soviet Jews. (2) That Ehrenburg should have been unaware of the mass executions of Jewish intellectuals and especially of those found guilty in the Moscow trial was simply not credible. (3) If Ehrenburg now spoke of those murdered as his "intimate friends," why had he denied even any acquaintance with these Jewish writers throughout the years 1950–55?

IN THE THIRD VOLUME, Ehrenburg actually describes meeting his two old friends, Babel and Markish, in Paris. He speaks with sorrow about Babel's death and of the loss of the unpublished material and notebooks which disappeared after his arrest. He says, "I last saw him in 1938. It was a sad meeting. But men make mistakes. He was arrested in 1939." He adds that in 1954 he heard from the Public Prosecutor that both Babel and Markish had been posthumously rehabilitated. But Ehrenburg has only revealed this significant fact in 1961 —in earlier years he considered it better to remain silent. It is not hard to see the obvious motives, yet before judging Ehrenburg one must pause, for since these events in the 'fifties he has produced yet another transformation scene in his in-and-out relationship with the Soviet régime.

Ever since Khrushchev's famous speech of summer 1956, which promised the burial of Stalinism together with Stalin, Ehrenburg on his literary front has been doing his share to advance "the thaw." Perhaps even more than his share: after initial caution, Ehrenburg has in the last two years become more outspoken in criticising hidebound Communist ideas about the arts. This attitude is reflected in the critical asides in his autobiography, and in recent articles he has gone even further, attacking Soviet writers for confusing clichés with patriotism. In his essay, "The Lesson of Stendhal," he deliberately dwelt on Stendhal's judgment that around a tyrannical ruler, however able he might be, only flattery and hypocrisy could flourish; and he quoted Stendhal's famous answer as to his nationality—that he was "a citizen of cosmopolis, a cosmopolitan." In another essay Ehrenburg rejected the idea of categorising genuine artists as "bourgeois writers"—the phrase, said Ehrenburg, was as inapplicable to Faulkner and Hemingway as to Flaubert and Balzac.

True, on a literary level these essays have been no more than middle-brow lectures in popular education, yet this was certainly their intention. And on the occasion of his 70th birthday and second Order of Lenin, Ehrenburg went a definite step further. In an address to the Union of Soviet Writers, broadcast by Moscow Radio, he spoke scathingly of the banality of most Soviet art, of "paintings that were like fifth-rate coloured photographs and novels not much better." He brought in a reference to the grim past, "the years when on every corner there was a search for a rootless vagabond without a passport." More than that, for the first time after a long interval he also proclaimed himself not only a Russian but a Jewish writer. Jewish self-consciousness, he said, had in this age of Hitler's massacres been cemented not only by the blood flowing in Jewish veins but by the river of blood that had flowed from these veins. Anyone who did not know it would have found it hard to imagine that not so many years earlier Ehrenburg had, at Stalin's behest, decried this same Jewish self-consciousness as counter-revolutionary.

WHAT, THEN, should be the verdict? From the nature of Ehrenburg's stormy career, it can be no simple one, for once again his recent turn shows preceding events in a new light. It is not too much to say that his latest writings and utterances all suggest an unsurprising desire for expiation and rehabilitation. Perhaps no writer has survived so many friends dead by execution or suicide as Ehrenburg. How should one judge his efforts at rehabilitation? There is not the slightest reason to doubt the genuineness of his newly proclaimed Jewish sentiments, but in this very fact lies pathos. In informed Jewish circles, Ehrenburg's role during Stalin's pogrom has been the subject of bitter attack, but from the outside one need perhaps say only this. If among the survivors or the relatives of those murdered, Ehrenburg is, to say the least, highly unpopular, the reasons are clear. But to critics who sit safely in the West he might well reply: "How can you possibly imagine what life was like under Stalin's totalitarian terror, when the only law for the individual was to survive—and if you cannot imagine, how can you judge?" In retrospect, one can see Ehrenburg's spiritual plight in 1948 in even clearer light. As has been said before, it was only in 1941, and in the spirit of the anti-Nazi campaign which united Frenchmen and Jews and Communists, that he had appeared as a leading official propagandist of the Soviet régime. Yet only a few years later, his whole philosophy must have suffered a shattering blow. He could no longer deny that as a barbaric dictator Stalin had succeeded Hitler, nor claim that "in the Soviet Union anti-semitism was impossible." The evident effect was that Ehrenburg took refuge not only in *sauve qui peut* but in a defensive, self-denying cynicism from which it took him several years to recover. This state of mind would explain his strange statements of the 'fifties and it lends pathos to his current re-discovery of his own identity.

More important is Ehrenburg's effort to vindicate himself as an independent artist, as a writer who had known the best that Paris and the West offered, and had yet become a loyal Soviet spokesman. Here, too, his critical utterances suggest a definite line. What stands out is the new role Ehrenburg has created for himself—that of an Elder Statesman of Soviet Literature, whose own roots go back to the legendary Paris of pre-1914, who has seen Bolsheviks come and go, and so is peculiarly fitted to bridge the gulf both between Soviet literature and the great tradition of 19th-century Russian literature, and also the contemporary artistic gulf between East and West.

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AND HERE WE COME to the heart of the matter. Through his past history and the fortune of his survival, Ehrenburg is indeed in a unique position as a Soviet critic. For reasons still not fully explained he can speak out more freely than others. The choice is his, therefore, whether to be a truly independent critic, to let his real feelings emerge as when he wrote *Roitschwantz*, or merely to be "a nonconformist conformist." After all, who else is there of the old guard who could help clarify the minds of young Soviet readers? From his first glimpse of Soviet society in 1921 and from his outsider's view during the next twenty years, Ehrenburg was able to see precisely what happened to freedom and what happened to the arts under the political system which Lenin set up. He could see how the chain of events—the purges of the 'thirties, the extermination of the Russian intelligentsia, the fifth-rate Soviet art of to-day—were not accidents due to Stalin's character but the direct product of a totalitarian form of society from which he, Ehrenburg, kept away for as long as possible.

Even to begin to tell this story could be of inestimable value to young Soviet readers, yet this is precisely what Ehrenburg in his autobiography has so far not done—not plainly, as Pasternak has spoken out. True, he hints plentifully about his early literary doubts about Communism, but these hints are muffled. He speaks of the sad deaths of literary friends of his generation, but avoids the question of why in a Communist society dedicated to the uplift of mankind such artists should have been imprisoned, executed, or driven to suicide.

When we come to Ehrenburg's attitude towards current issues, we meet the same ambiguity. Recently, for instance, when the young Russian poet Yevtushenko wrote a moving poem about the wartime massacre of 140,000 Jews by the Nazis near Kiev and went on to attack Russian anti-Semitism, one critic named Starikov counter-attacked the poet, referring to Ehrenburg's earlier writings.

On this occasion, Ehrenburg's terse reply was all that was needed. Starikov had arbitrarily taken his writings out of their context, he said, "so that they correspond to his ideas and contradict mine." Yet not long before, on another test occasion, when asked to comment about the vindictive arrest of Pasternak's friend Ivinskaya, Ehrenburg simply side-stepped the issue by repeating the dreary official Party line.

If Ehrenburg wants his plea for better understanding between Soviet and Western writers to carry weight, such equivocation is hardly enough. No one, to be sure, expects Ehrenburg to be "another Pasternak," but the question is whether he will speak out with the sincerity that befits the author of *Julio Jurenito* and *Roitschwantz*. And this means one thing: young Soviet writers like Yevtushenko surely deserve to know not only *what* happened to their predecessors, but *why*. In the earlier parts of his autobiography, Ehrenburg has chronicled the tragedies of his life as a writer under Communism, but without adequately presenting them in their real context. One hopes that in subsequent volumes he will not thus turn away from the true meaning of his own "stormy life."

T. R. Fyvel

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THE PRESS

State Visit

THE foreign correspondent of a London newspaper was red with anger. "I refuse to be associated with any apology to any Iranian," he shouted. A mile away in the ruins of Persepolis the Shah of Persia was entertaining the Queen of England to luncheon. White in the face, a young Iranian Foreign Office official approached a member of the British press party. "The Queen has come here to strengthen the friendship between our countries. I fear the behaviour of the British press will make the relationship worse." He was one of the twelve Foreign Office officials, all holding University doctorates or degrees, who had been seconded to look after the journalists and photographers covering the State Visit to Iran.

A week before the press party had looked forward to the four days in Iran. It had been told that all would be accommodated in a first-class hotel in single rooms, that a guide, chauffeur, and car would be at the disposal of each group of three and that everyone was invited to stay on in Teheran for forty-eight hours after the departure of the Queen as guests of the Iranian Government. After six hours in Teheran the Iranian guides were already dispirited and anxious. They had had their first taste of a British press party abroad.

There was trouble even before the Queen arrived. The guides, smart young men in dark suits and polished shoes, had taken their charges to the special press office, equipped with telephones, typewriters, and telegraphic facilities, to meet the Director of the Publications and Broadcasting Department. A quiet man, he gently explained the arrangements for the State drive into Teheran. He was interrupted by a rough voice. "What about the truck for the photographers?"

"I am sorry, there will be no truck for photographers in the procession. There are three stands on the route."

"What do you mean, 'no truck'? We've been all round India and Pakistan and we've had a truck in every procession! We are going to have one here!"

Through the babble about trucks and cameras a female voice piped in. "And where will the agency car be in the procession?" The Director explained again that all the arrangements had been made with the British Embassy: that neither journalists nor photographers would be in the procession and there was nothing more he could do. "But this is quite ludicrous! We've always had an agency car!" The Director, visibly shaken by the mounting hostility, did not think to ask whether there were trucks and press cars in the State processions in London.

THAT EVENING the Press Attaché at the British Embassy gave a reception for the British, Iranian, and foreign press in the Embassy cinema. His guests were restive when they arrived. The British photographers stood about in groups loudly complaining that their camera cases had been searched at the airport when they went to photograph the Royal arrival and that their stand had been too far away. The journalists were telling each other how "Fascist" they thought the country was and describing the way in which the police kept back the crowds. The Iranian guests stood in groups together and asked each other what was wrong.

The Press Attaché spoke from the stage, welcoming the Iranians in Persian, before beginning a summary of the programme in English. He got as far as the banquet that evening. *"'ere, hold on a moment!"* The photographer held up the hand that was not holding his drink. Were there going to be any facilities to photograph the visit at all, he wanted to know. The Press Attaché began to answer, but gave up under a barrage of shouts and spent the rest of his reception surrounded by arguing British, French, and Italian press men and women.

That night in the hotel only two of the guides, all of whom were also eating there, were invited by their charges to join their tables. "I wonder whether we are the right people to look after you," one said. In the bar an English voice came through. "Mine doesn't speak any English. He's a lot of bloody good." The next morning only four of the journalists turned out to watch the Queen lay a wreath on the tomb of Reza Shah, visit a new block of flats, and attend a sports display in the afternoon. The spectators at the stadium watched a photographer scanning the stand for his guide. He spotted him. "Where the hell do you think you've been!" he shouted. "I've been looking all over the bloody place for you! Didn't I tell you to wait? Come on then!" The young guide paled. "Why is that fellow always shouting at me? What is the matter with him?" He scurried away.

THE photographers and the agencies got their trucks and cars for the drive into Isfahan, but there was trouble outside a mosque when an army officer and several soldiers tried to stop journalists and photographers from following the Royal families. Inside the mosque a guide spoke to his journalist. "Would you mind sharing a room tonight with Mr. A. instead of with me? Mr. A. has told his guide he will not share with him." The journalist refused. "I am very happy that you, at least, are prepared to share your room with one of us." Later Mr. A. carried his objection to the hotel manager. "You might at least have the courtesy to consult us before you allot the rooms." For the record Mr. A. had shared a room, without consultation, almost every night during the previous six weeks in India, Pakistan, and Nepal, but with a fellow-pressman. Miss B. also objected loudly and ungraciously about her accommodation. The Iranians had arranged for all the women to be in one hotel and the men in another close by. "I happen to object to sleeping with women," she shouted at the Director of Publications. "I demand to be moved over." She was.

After the visit to the ruined city of Persepolis

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the press were taken to lunch in a hotel. A few relaxed in chairs on the porch. One left his chair to refill his glass. A senior Iranian Foreign Office official sank into the empty seat. "That's my mate's chair, do you mind moving?" The official, a short, slight man, said he would stay there until the photographer's friend returned. There are different accounts of how the ensuing argument developed and who said what to whom, but at one point the photographer threatened to hit the Iranian. One of the guides approached a journalist and said that all the guides had regretfully decided to have nothing more to do with the press party unless the photographer apologised. The journalist asked the photographer to say he was sorry for the sake of peace and Anglo-Iranian relations. He was told to mind his own ——— business. It was then that another journalist shouted out that he would not be associated with any apology to any Iranian and left the guides white with humiliation and anger.

THEY GOT THEIR OWN BACK to some extent later that day. Of the three press planes only one was a Viscount. A number of the press party who had previously travelled on a Dakota transferred themselves to the Viscount so that there was not room for all who had Viscount tickets. Two Frenchmen admitted that they were on the wrong plane but said they had to get back to Teheran quickly in order to get their photographs on the Paris plane. The British journalists and photographers were in a similar hurry. No one would move and the pleas of the pilot, stewards, and airfield officials were ignored. Someone suggested that the British Press Attaché and his wife might take the slower plane. They had to be back for a banquet and sank more deeply into their seats as the argument billowed about them. The Director of Publications was asked if one of his staff could leave the plane. He replied that none of his staff were on board, folded his arms and sat back. At least six of the guides were there. A journalist appealed to a guide to give up his seat. He stood up. "I will go because you have asked me politely, but I want to make it clear I would not do this for anyone else of the British party." At that moment Miss B. chipped in, "It is about time our hosts learnt the meaning of courtesy." Her companion, a male journalist, repeated the remark in a louder voice. The guide sat down. "If we are discourteous, we have learnt how to be in the last four days. Now I will not move." Meanwhile a young official on the Director's staff was shouting, "Take your hands off me! I will not be thrown out! I am on my government's service!" as he struggled to free himself from two men who were trying to lift him bodily out of his seat. Finally a Frenchman gave his films to a friend and left the plane.

The next morning three guides arrived at the hotel to find their men had already left for London. "We do not understand it. They told us to be here at nine. They haven't even left us a note."

IT MUST be made clear that the photographers and journalists, who by their rudeness, ill-manners, arrogance, and complete lack of sensitivity, alienated every Iranian official who came into contact with the press party, were in a minority. The majority went quietly along with their work and tended to ignore the behaviour of their colleagues. But they cannot escape some blame for the disastrous impression made by the group. Instead of responding to the friendliness of their hosts, which was markedly warm on the first day, they "kept themselves to themselves," treated their guides with cool indifference, and never risked breaking up the system of co-operation, which replaces competition on Royal tours, by disassociating themselves from those who were openly hostile.

But a fair portion of the blame lies squarely on the Fleet Street editors and those responsible for choosing men and women to represent their newspapers and photographic agencies overseas. Perhaps few of them realise that it is the press representatives rather than the Royal entourage who come into closest contact with the officials of the host country and it is by them that the country will be judged rather than by the Queen. Nor can any newspaper expect to uphold its reputation abroad when its representative is foul-mouthed, rude, and clearly uninterested in the country he is visiting. The story of the visit to Iran is not unique, but it is particularly serious. The Royal visit gave an opportunity for a section of the British press to demonstrate its understanding and sympathetic interest in Iran's problems and, in particular, in the efforts the Shah is making to liberalise the régime and effect social reform. In their guides the journalists had intelligent and educated men who cared passionately for their country and who were keen to discuss its problems and put forward their own ideas. Instead they were at the best ignored and at the worst insulted and humiliated. They are unlikely to forget or to keep their experience of the British press to themselves. The Iranian Foreign Minister was certainly informed of the incident at Persepolis.

The same sort of incidents will happen again in other places until editors bear in mind that it is not necessarily the man or woman who can turn in a good description of a royal procession or take an adequate photograph who is the most suitable person to send abroad. The Iranian Government paid for the accommodation, transport, food and drink, of all but two or three of the group. There is no excuse for bad manners even if a man—or his newspaper—is paying his own way. But when hospitality is accepted it is even less excusable. Would Miss B. demand to have her room changed if she was staying a week-end with friends or would Mr. C. tell his host to get off his own chair? There are English people who are intolerably arrogant when they cross the Channel. It is extraordinary that any responsible newspaper should employ them.

Reporter

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LETTERS

Haffner on Germany

THERE ARE three assumptions in Sebastian Haffner's eloquent and important article about *Germany, Russia, and the West* that are historically incorrect. In the first place Mr. Haffner claims that the German decision of choosing NATO and siding with the West was made in 1954–55 "after the biggest national debate and crisis of conscience which the country went through since the years 1930–33." This is not so. The overwhelming majority of the Germans had opted for the American alliance by 1952. If there was any serious debate about this choice within Germany at all, it took place around 1949, kept up for a while by a rather restricted circle of certain ex-diplomats and political thinkers. Mr. Haffner speaks of the "famous Stalin note of March 10th, 1952." Instead of being "famous," this note, in reality, was so little known and appreciated that even opposition politicians did not recognise its possible meaning until six or seven years later when they re-discovered and unearthed the "offer" of 1952 during a brief and inconclusive national political debate. I venture to say that most Germans, including many intellectuals and politicians, are even to-day almost as unaware as are Americans of the fact—if it is a fact, and I am inclined to agree with Mr. Haffner that it is—that in 1952 Stalin was suggesting to the Germans "national unity at the price of neutrality."

Second, Mr. Haffner claims that in 1938 Munich turned the Czechs, "the most touchingly loyal member of the Western alliance and community into its bitter and vindictive enemy. The Czechs became the most useful and active collaborators of the Nazis from 1938 to 1945...." Now, apart from the condition that it was not the Czechs but the Slovaks (a people who rejoiced in Munich) who turned out to be loyal German collaborators, this is a curious misreading of the psychological reactions of nations. Of course the Czechs were disillusioned after Munich: but, if the Czechs remained relatively quiescent during the war, this was because they remained Czechs, a people endowed with certain particularly bourgeois and not very martial qualities, and not because they had become pro-German or even anti-Western. It is because of the kind of people Hitler's Germans were that the Czechs had really no option of joining them; and it is because of the kind of people the Soviet Russians are that the West Germans, thank God, have no option of freely joining *them*. Moreover, Mr. Haffner uses the term "West" imprecisely and vaguely. Yes: the Germans may grow disillusioned with Britain; with France; with America; but not with the "West." It is reasonable to assume that, in certain circumstances, the Germans may—I do not think that they will—turn away from NATO in the direction of a politically *and* militarily more independent Europe, something that, following Dulles' lead, they rejected less than four years ago.* It is not reasonable to assume that the Germans, because they are disillusioned with NATO, would prefer to be subordinated to Russia.

Mr. Haffner's third, and perhaps most serious, mistake is the assumption that flows from his imprecise usage of the term "West." He says that public opinion in America "appears to be left without official guidance and tends, though as yet in an uncertain and perhaps somewhat shamefaced manner, to follow the British lead." The contention that American public opinion, especially nowadays, is formed without official guidance, is very arguable. What is more important, the differences of American and British public opinion and, even more, of American and British popular sentiment on the issue of Berlin, indeed, on the issue of war and peace, are quite profound. I cannot illustrate this argument in detail: but it is at least evident that while the Macmillan government faces an opposition from the Left, and from pacifists, the Kennedy administration faces (or, rather, it tries everything to avoid facing) popular sentiment and potential political opposition from the militant, and from the Right.

THE DIFFERENCES OF American and British state policies about Germany are more subtle and less profound than these differences of popular sentiment: but they do exist, and they have indeed existed for almost two decades by now. They go back to 1943–44 when the State Department (Roosevelt and Morgenthau notwithstanding) successfully postponed and opposed Churchill's idea of partitioning Germany into some of its old historical components. As early as in 1943 the German and Central European section of the OSS, forerunner of the CIA, headed by Allen Dulles, began working with groups of Germans, often very much at cross-purposes with British intelligence: these subtle but profound differences came to a head ten years later, in the obscure and sordid scandal around Otto John. It is well known that in 1945, after Yalta, Churchill wanted to take as much of Germany as was possible within the Western zones of occupation, and that he failed because of Eisenhower and because of unanimous opposition in Washington. It was Churchill who, worried about a possible Central European vacuum, as early as in May, 1945, suggested that perhaps some of the Germans ought to keep their arms in front of the Russian menace. Five years later the re-arming of West Germany became an American policy, widely supported by American public opinion. And the historical condition that, in the face of this German

* It may be said that in 1948 the West Germans chose—and rightly—the West and Europe; but what they chose in 1954–55 was not merely Europe but their alliance with America, superseding just about everything else. In December, 1957, when Spaak proposed the possible establishment of an independent Western European nuclear-armed force, Adenauer sided with Dulles and rebuked Spaak, who had spoken with the tacit consent of a number of Western European NATO countries.

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re-armament and the crystallisation of a German-American alliance, the Russians between 1952 and 1955 showed many signs of considering a mutual evacuation of Germany for the price of German neutrality on something like the Austrian model is, even now, in 1961, something of which not only the American public but the overwhelming majority of American cold war and international experts are entirely unaware (as the reviews of my recently published *A History of the Cold War* attest).

The main European policy of John Foster Dulles was the promotion of an American-German alliance. With this most Germans gladly went along, since they believed that this policy, and this policy alone, could result in the eventual re-unification and perhaps in the rise of a new Germany to some grandeur. Unfortunately it is now becoming evident that the best this policy may achieve is not reunification but the continued division of Germany with West Berlin and West Germany kept on this side of the iron curtain. Here we may once again witness the historical spectacle of the discrepancy between intentions and consequences. The United States aimed at the re-unification of Germany "in freedom": yet it was the rigidity and the unimaginative character of American policy that led to the now present hardening of the division of the Germanies and even of Berlin. On the other hand, the British who have been much less sympathetically inclined towards the Germans than have the Americans (and I mean governments as well as peoples) have, after all, no matter how quietly and at times timidly, kept suggesting the possibility of disengagement, always with some countervailing Russian withdrawal from some portion of Central Europe in mind. This British policy was first pronounced by Churchill in his House of Commons speech of May 11th, 1953, a speech no less historic and no less futile than his Fulton Iron Curtain speech of March, 1946. On both occasions he was criticised by the American press and by official Washington; on both occasions Dean Acheson literally ran out on him; on both occasions his advocacies were described as those of a frustrated statesman who had grown senile.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF the foregoing are obvious. They are that, after all is said, Britain is more of Europe than is the United States; and that the Foreign Office and Downing Street have had, by and large, a better historical record in understanding German and European realities and possibilities than the White House and State Department. I say this while, on the other hand, I am in full agreement with Mr. Haffner's principal underlying observation about certain British press reactions to Germany's crucial troubles. I, too, regard the frequently skittish and occasionally shrill Germanophobe opinions of the British press as symptoms of neurosis, of a lacking of national self-confidence, unworthy of spokesmen of the British people whose national qualities I otherwise so much admire.

JOHN LUKACS

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Missing

THE *Soviet authorities have requested the officials responsible for the French Exposition in Moscow to remove twenty-six volumes which had been on exhibition in the book section. Among them were the following authors and titles:*

Georges Bernanos: Français, si vous saviez; Le Chemin de la croix des âmes.
Gabriel Marcel: L'Heure théâtrale.
Michel de Castillo: Le Colleur d'affiches.
André Malraux: Les Conquérants; La Condition humaine; L'Espoir.
Alfred Sauvy: La Nature sociale.
Raymond Cartier: Les Cinquante Amériques; Les Treize Europes.
Gaeton Picon: Panorama des idées contemporaines.
Albert Camus: L'Homme révolté.
L. F. Céline: D'un château à l'autre.
Tibor Mende: La Chine et son ombre.
Jean-Paul Sartre: Les mains sales; Critique de la raison dialectique.
Simone Weil: Ecrits historiques et politiques.
And finally a book by Maurice Merleau-Ponty which was not identified.

LE MONDE (*Paris*)

Orwell and Koestler

AS A PERSONAL FRIEND of Orwell's, and a writer whose work helped to shape his mind, Mr. Koestler has the right, if anyone has, to wither me with his sarcasm [ENCOUNTER, November]. But not even he can convince without giving his reasons: the mere unargued assertion that Sir Richard's book "deserves serious and detailed critical consideration" isn't enough to establish this, while to say that it is "the best work on Orwell published to date" is merely amusing to anyone who knows the others. (How could it be *worse* than Mr. Brander's? or Mr. Atkins's?)

So I'm afraid I find no repentance in my heart at having used Sir Richard's book as a "coat-hanger," which, after all, is what I said in my opening paragraph [ENCOUNTER, October] that I intended to do. It isn't, in fact, true that I never revert to it after that paragraph—I do so on p. 75—but the main charge I cheerfully confess to.

On the more serious accusation, of undervaluing *1984*, I must point out that this represents a difference of opinion that will always divide Orwellians. As my essay argues, Orwell's most creative period was during the war, when he was writing the essays and *Animal Farm*; no doubt he would have entered a new and important phase in the 1950s, but "illness, abetted by his own reckless and self-destructive tendencies, deprived the world of these mature writings." So that "the critical

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statements are the backbone of Orwell's life-work as we have it."

Is this really such nonsense that it deserves to be called a fish-filled frankfurter? True, *1984* contains the concepts of Newspeak, Doublethink, Big Brother—but these are *critical* ideas, straight from the mental world of the essays. What does the novel really add, that Mr. Koestler should characterise it off-hand as "Orwell's masterpiece"?

And come now, it wasn't *1984* as a whole that I was describing as a weapon put into the hands of the British Conservative Party: it was the idea of calling the ruling party "Ingsoc," which we all know, as a matter of personal memory, *was* used by the opponents of English Socialism—and will be used again if that Socialism ever climbs on to its feet and makes a serious political challenge.

Next, Mr. Warburg. He finds me "bad-tempered" for complaining about the incompleteness and unreliability of the text he has just given us of Orwell's *Collected Essays*, which he now says were never intended to be a "collection" at all, only a selection. (Then why not say so?) The book "was well reviewed elsewhere." (Don't be awkward, Wain.) Actually, most reviewers showed up set-pieces on Orwell as literary and social critic, from their previous knowledge, and didn't examine the book itself: that was obvious. One of the few who did, Mr. Nicolas Walter in *Anarchy* (No. 8, p. 250) concluded: "I advise anyone who can bear not to own a book of George Orwell's essays for a time to wait until there is a less imperfect one available."

Mr. Warburg then says that he has no objection to printing a correct edition provided someone else will do the work. "If the proofs have indeed been badly read" (if? *if?*) "we should be glad to receive a list of misprints and textual corruptions." I'd like someone to do my work for me, too.

"It would take too long," says Mr. Warburg, to explain how the essay on Kipling came to be left out. I think he should have let us be the judges of that: after all, not everybody is as short of time as they seem to be at S. & W.'s. Personally, I'd also be willing to spend a few minutes reading an explanation of how the essay on Gandhi, one of Orwell's absolutely crucial pieces, essential for an understanding of his later thought, got missed out as well. "We have no office boy," he concludes. The position is all too obviously vacant.

JOHN WAIN

London

The Monarchy

I ENJOYED Henry Fairlie's article about the Monarchy [ENCOUNTER, October], and agree that there is something puzzling about the disproportionate and indeed almost groundless rage which it provokes in fashionable circles. But I was sorry he missed a fact that has always bothered me.

The critics always write and talk as though we were unique in having a Monarchy. But there are five other mature North European states with a monarchy. One of these went out of its way to keep one, less than a century ago, after a successful nationalist secession (Norway). Holland, perhaps the most consistently important and fruitful of these countries historically, actually switched from a Republic to a monarchy.

I draw no particular conclusion from these facts, except a conclusion about British radicals. For some reason many of these seem to choose to believe that they live, not merely in an unsatisfactory society, but in a uniquely mad one. Yet in fact most of the aspects of Britain, trivial or important, to which they take exception, are simply part of the common European tradition and habit, and are as true in several other countries as they are here.

Thus, for example, it is fashionable, and no doubt also sensible, to ridicule the facts that we drive on the left-hand side of the road, enjoy spending our Sunday afternoons inspecting the gardens of noblemen, and refer to the rest of Europe as "the Continent." All these foibles are shared by the Swedes. More seriously, we share with America a non-decimal system of weights and measures and an independent education system which confers advantages in life on the children of the rich. Like the Italians and the French, we have a strongly marked sense of social class, and like the Dutch, Belgians, and French we enjoy the advantages and disadvantages of being an ex-colonial power. Non-conformist sabbatarian and similar pressures are as strong or stronger in Holland, and parts of Switzerland and the U.S.

Obviously there is no reason to rejoice that these things are so. But it is odd, to say the least, that we have been persuaded on each of these points that we are peculiarly idiotic. Are we to deduce, just among those people who are freest with the charge themselves, an ignorance of the rest of the European world, and a lingering of the old conviction that Britain is something quite separate and apart?

GODFREY HODGSON

London

"Open Road"

CLANCY SIGAL sabotaging Hollywood films was merely juvenile; but his piece called "Song of the Open Road" [ENCOUNTER, November] shows that he's been explaining how it is to be an American in England for so long now that he's forgotten what it was like being an American in America.

Since hitch-hiking to L.A., Sigal has evidently been reading Kerouac, Nabokov, and perhaps even Steinbeck. Then we get all his dreary self-pity because a policeman talked to him in Kansas.

I have hitch-hiked across the States a few times. So have thousands of other young Englishmen. The plain fact is that it's no more difficult than hitch-hiking in Europe—which plenty of girls manage to do quite easily. Sigal makes it sound like a forced march through the jungle.

Why doesn't Sigal stop acting the stage American and write that great working-class novel about Chicago which he keeps promising—the one that's going to put Bellow, Algren, etc., in the shade?

DAVID TOMLIN

London

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AUTHORS

George Steiner is a young American literary critic who has had two books published recently—*Tolstoy or Dostoevsky* and *The Death of Tragedy* (both by Faber in London)....

David Marquand is a member of the staff of *The Guardian* and has contributed articles on "Bombs and Scapegoats" and "Labour and European Cause" to recent ENCOUNTERS. He is preparing a biography of Ramsay MacDonald....

Philip Williams contributed a full study of the Algerian question to the January 1961 ENCOUNTER. He is the author of *Politics in Post-War France* and is a member of Nuffield College, Oxford....

Marcus Cunliffe's contribution on p. 19 is an abbreviated version of his essay on European Images of America which will appear in *The Evolution of American Thought*, edited by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and Morton White, to be published by Houghton Mifflin.

Correction

We regret the printing errors which appeared in the introduction to the Freedom in Berlin statement which we published last month. It should of course have read: "The statement has been sent this month to the representatives of the Permanent Missions to the United Nations at present meeting in New York" (and *not*, as misprinted, "in Berlin").

The United States Post Office requires ENCOUNTER, *in common with other magazines, to issue the following Statement for a second-class mail permit in the U.S.A.*

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Signature of business manager: John Hall.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 21st day of September, 1961 Ronald S. Friedman (a Commissioner for Oaths for life).

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THE NEW GERMANY AND THE OLD NAZIS

by T. H. Tetens

A new Germany has emerged. Its unrivalled energy has already made it one of the most powerful states in Europe. Now as West Germany's position becomes more crucial, it is of vital importance to everyone to understand its aims and ambitions. This book looks behind the official facade of the West Germany of today.

Based on thousands of news stories and court records, most of them of German origin, it documents in detail the dangerous resurgence of Nazism and anti-semitism in the "new" Germany. It describes notorious occurrences of anti-semitism such as the Zind case—and the German reaction to it; it tells of the current activities of the Nazi SS; it reveals former Nazi officials who hold important positions in the present German government; it exposes former Nazi criminals and shows how they have been protected; it outlines the present plans of the underground Nazi party; and it presents the record of Hitler's judges who still sit on the bench.

T. H. TETENS is a leading expert on German geopolitics. He was born in Berlin, worked during the '20's in Germany as an economist and newspaper editor and for over thirty years has studied the Pan-German movement and the Nazi party. In 1938, after escaping from one of Hitler's concentration camps, he went to the United States. From 1946 to 1947 he served with the U.S. War Crimes Commission. He is now director of the Library on Germanic and Related International Problems and author of *Germany Plots with the Kremlin*.

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SECKER & WARBURG

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THE NEXT issue of ENCOUNTER, out on December 20th, will be our 100th number. To celebrate the occasion we are publishing an enlarged issue. The cover has been designed by Henry Moore, and there will be contributions by E. M. Forster, T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, Edith Sitwell, Norman Mailer, letters of George Orwell, and many other attractive features. This will certainly be one of the most sought-after issues we have published and in time may well become a collector's piece.

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